TELOS

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Paul Piccone and Gary Ulmen

Schmitt's Influence on American Conservatives
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Schmitt and Federalism
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Uses and Abuses of Carl Schmitt[1]

Paul Piccone and Gary Ulmen

Carl Schmitt's ideas were already a controversial topic in the US long before his works were translated into English. At least, so it is claimed by the latest generation of American Schmitt scholars, who have uncritically bought into a questionable German tradition[2] that since the 1950s has sought to checkmate Schmitt out of any legitimate political discourse.[3]

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1. An earlier draft of this article was read at a conference devoted to "Carl Schmitt: Pensatore Politico del XX Secolo," held in Rome, November 27, 2001.

2. Indicative of this German tradition is a 1987 symposium on Schmitt and the critique of liberalism, where Karl Hansen acknowledged that, after WWII, Schmitt had been turned into an "object that symbolized the past to be overcome," and that "to distance oneself from Schmitt was to distance oneself from National Socialism." See Karl Hansen and Hans Lietzmann, eds., *Carl Schmitt und die Liberalismuskritik* (Opladen: Leske & Budrich, 1988). In the same symposium, Dieter Haselbach also articulated the view, widespread at that time within the German Left, that Schmitt was the source for the neo-conservative political agenda and the "Reagan revolution," and that his analyses of Weimar's political and constitutional problems had become "a foil for criticizing emancipatory tendencies in American society." For a devastating critique of the whole symposium, see Joseph Bendersky, "Carl Schmitt as *Occasio*," in *Telos* 78 (Winter 1988-89), pp. 191-208.

3. According to Scheuerman, "Schmitt exerted a subterranean influence on postwar American political thought" and "helped determine the contours of political thinking in the United States [after] 1945." See William E. Scheuerman, *Carl Schmitt: The End of Law* (New York: Rowan & Littlefield, 1999), pp. 1 and 12. Emanuel Richter also claims that after WWII there was a "silent reception" of Schmitt's ideas among German intellectuals who had been forced into exile by the Nazi regime — a mysterious "talkative silence" resulting from their embarrassment at the prospect of having to confront openly Schmitt's "shameful intellectual heritage." See Emanuel Richter, "Carl Schmitt: The Defective Guidance for the Critique of Political Liberalism," in *Cardozo Law Review*, Vol. 21, Nos. 5-6 (May 2000), pp. 1621-22. As Bendersky demonstrates, however, there is no evidence of any such influence on the émigré intellectuals in question: Friedrich Hayek, Hans Morgantau, Joseph Schumpeter and Leo Strauss. See Joseph W. Bendersky, "The Definitive and the Dubious: Carl Schmitt's Influence on Conservative Political and Legal Theory in the US," in this issue of *Telos*.

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The result has been the perpetuation of ostensibly false interpretations of his ideas as being terminally fascist, thus unintendedly inflating their relevance and distorting the real reasons they have attracted, and continue to attract, any attention. These prejudicial readings have succeeded in reversing what began in the 1970s as an objective reception of Schmitt in the US, and in turning the clock back to the years following WWII, when even the rare "mention of Schmitt's name usually aroused such hostility that no objective discussion was possible."[4] This state of affairs results primarily from the difficulties managerial-liberal thought has had, and continues to have, with "coming to terms with a past" that is difficult to mainline into an otherwise discredited linear theory of history as inevitable progress and gradual emancipation.

This ideological approach is needed to legitimate predominant relations of domination (obtaining primarily among a ruling elite of experts, professionals, politicians, etc., and a well-administered citizenry) as being neutral and natural. Not only does this framework require automatic dismissal of all other modes of political organization, but also discrediting ideas perceived to be their ideological foundations. The result is a series of distortions and misinterpretations, which instead of defending and strengthening American institutions as claimed, weaken and undermine them by systematically occluding their real nature, and redefining them in extraneous "republican" terms — terms abstracted from European political realities brought about by the French Revolution. It is paradoxical that a European thinker such as Schmitt, whose entire career was focused primarily on strictly European problems, provides some of the most powerful conceptual tools to make sense of this peculiar predicament — including the idiosyncratic reaction to his ideas by managerial-liberal apologists, who see him as a major threat to the oxymoronic system they describe as liberal-democracy.

Trapped within the metaphysical parameters of a unidirectional theory of history that can interpret radical differences only as deviations or pathologies, managerial-liberal thought confronts the 20th and now the 21st century through obsolete, historically-specific categories hypostatized to the level of universality. The result is the homogenization of history and the elimination of particularity. When not dismissing it outright, such a *de facto* Manichean approach can deal with "the other" only as a

4. George Schwab, *The Challenge of the Exception: An Introduction to the Political Ideas of Carl Schmitt between 1921 and 1936* (1970), 2nd ed. (New York: Greenwood Press, 1989), p. vi.

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variation on the same. Thus, whenever otherness appears, it must either be persuaded back into full sameness or else summarily liquidated as evil. Despite all the rhetoric about openness through "undistorted communication" and interminable dialogue, participation in discussions and deliberations is conditional on the prior acceptance of unchallengeable rules concerning a formal rationality and mode of discourse which automatically exclude all but those intellectuals and professionals fully initiated into the predominant jargon.[5] Consequently, confrontation with "the other" cannot result in any Hegelian transcendence, whereby development takes place by internalizing and thus coopting the opponent's moment of truth, but freezes radically opposing positions into a stalemate that only perpetuates conflict *ad infinitum* — pending resolution by other means. It is never a matter of reintegrating the radical opponent's counter-claims, but of either demanding capitulation or proceeding with outright rejection.

Within such a dogmatic scientistic context pretending to be ideologically neutral, history becomes straightjacketed as an ontogenetic reconstruction of the triumphal march of managerial-liberal thought. Particular categories developed within particular contexts to explain particular phenomena are automatically integrated within the predominant universalist framework to apply anywhere, anytime. The same happens with particular political ideologies. Thus, competing systems such as Nazism, fascism and communism — and now even Islamic integralism — are not only systematically misinterpreted, but, like liberalism, also universalized as *permanent* threats to a managerial liberalism hypostatized as the natural outcome of evolution and, therefore, as normal and natural. This is why such political thinkers as Schmitt, whose work was always inextricably rooted in problematic historical contexts,[6] can still be perceived as an ideological threat, long after those concrete historical situations have faded into the past. Because for a time he was opportunistically embroiled in Nazi politics, and the new American anti-Schmittians see Nazism and fascism not as closed chapters of 20th century history, but rather as permanent threats

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5. See Nicholas Meriwether, "Discourse Ethics and the Problem of Oppression," in *Telos* 119 (Spring 2001), pp. 99-114.

6. As Schmitt never tired of emphasizing as part of his critique of universalism, political concepts are always answers to particular problems and make sense only in the specific context within which they are formulated. He even warned against the automatic transposition of concepts from one discipline to another: "The greatest and most egregious misunderstandings . . . can be explained by the erroneous transfer of a concept at home in one sphere . . . to other spheres of intellectual life." See Carl Schmitt, "The Age of Neutralizations and Depoliticizations (1929)," in *Telos* 96 (Summer 1993), pp. 134ff.

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to liberalism, Schmitt's ideas are interpreted as something that must be eliminated, rather than as challenges to be confronted. In fact, the demonization of Schmitt is instrumentalized to defend the *status quo* and predominant relations of domination. Assumed to be the best of all possible systems, the existing managerial framework, run by a New Class elite, legitimates itself as the *only* bulwark of Western values by opposing all competing alternatives — equally rooted in the Western tradition — as lethal threats to its own interpretation of progress and emancipation. During the Cold War, the *de facto* permanent state of emergency contributed to the academic institutionalization of this state of affairs, which persists long after both Nazism and fascism (and, after 1989, even communism) have been vanquished. Worse yet, it perpetuates a Jacobin historiography predicated on the primacy of *economic,* rather than of *political* parameters, primarily as a struggle between capitalism and the poor, rather than as one between intellectuals and politicians versus ordinary people.

American Exceptionalism versus European Universalism

Yet, the political imperatives of the Cold War were not the only obstacles preventing serious debate concerning the nature of fascism, Nazism, and communism[7] — and thus also of liberalism and its theoretical foundations. The ascendant republican reinterpretations of American history have contributed to the occlusion of American particularism and its mainstreaming into managerial-liberal universal history. The subject of so much debate in Germany, this American version of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* had nothing to do with guilt or nationalism, but with the often

7. Because of lack of serious discussion, after WWII all of these ideologies were readily stereotyped and homogenized according to the political needs of the Cold War. Stalin's successful liquidation in the late 1930s of all internal dissidents as traitors — to the point of murdering people like Leon Trotsky and Nikolai Bukharin — had already facilitated the imposition of the Comintern's official interpretation of fascism as the only legitimate one (Georgi Dimitrov's crude account as the last stand of the reactionary bourgeoisie). For the most succinct account of the Third International account of fascism, see Nicos Poulantzas, *Fascism and Dictatorship: The Third International and the Problem of Fascism*, tr. by Judith White (London: Verso, 1979). Still unwittingly embroiled in Comintern political and theoretical hegemony, even the anti-Stalinist Left, including sophisticated circles such as the Frankfurt School, were unable to come up with anything radically different. They also saw fascism as a permanent possibility within advanced capitalist societies: a regime bent on manipulating mass consciousness. Defeated on the battlefield, fascism was thus ultimately triumphant within the winning countries themselves. Similarly, the American Right, culminating with the McCarthyism of the 1950s, dismissed all branches of an increasingly fragmented Left as part of a monolithic Stalinist conspiracy to attain world domination by penetrating and corrupting even the highest levels of the US government.

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unacknowledged and continuing struggle over American historiography and the question of American exceptionalism: whether the US is just another European-style nation-state confronting similar socio-economic problems and political choices, or a federation *sui generis*, whose understanding requires altogether different categories of analysis. From a foreign policy perspective, this question would be one of imperialism or isolationism. In terms of social and political theory, it concerns the viability of importing the allegedly universally-valid categories of European liberal theory to analyze particular American political realities.[8]

Forced by WWII into playing the major world power role it had rejected after refusing to join the League of Nations, and subsequently confronted with the communist threat, the US in the second half of the 20th century abruptly rejected isolationist sentiments that had resurfaced in the interwar period. Instead, it sought to mainline its own self-understanding within the kind of universalist political framework it had traditionally rejected since George Washington's Farewell Address — at least until Sept. 11, when the Islamic fundamentalist attack made the irreducibility of radical otherness unmistakably obvious.[9] Suddenly, the inherent universalist pretenses of liberalism again were demonstrated to be what they had always been, i.e., the expression of a particular version of secularized Christianity. This cataclysmic development encouraged a turn toward unilateralism in foreign affairs — something that had been developing slowly since the end of the Cold War.

8. Schmitt prefigured this scenario in the late 1930's. See Carl Schmitt, "Großraum gegen Universalismus (1939): Die völkerrechtliche Kampf um die Monroedoktrin," in Carl Schmitt, *Positionen und Begriffe im Kampf mit Weimar — Genf — Versailles 1923-1939* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, [1940], 2nd ed., 1988), pp. 295-302, and *Völkerrechtliche Großraumordnung mit Interventionsverbot für raumfremde Mächte* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, [1941], 2nd. ed., 1991).

9. See Paul Piccone, "So, This is the Brave New World Order!" in *Telos* 120 (Summer 2001), pp. 178ff. Immediately after the collapse of the USSR and the end of the Cold War, the first Bush Administration sought to continue and actually to broaden the Cold War policy of multilateralism, especially during the Gulf War when, for diplomatic as well as logistical reasons, American strategy was subordinated to — or at least compromised with — that of the "coalition" assembled to carry out the operation. The results turned out to be less than satisfactory. The decision not to take Baghdad, and to leave Saddam Hussein in power, out of deference to the demands of Arab allies and Turkish *Realpolitik*, resulted in a stalemate that may have been misperceived as American or Western weakness, and have emboldened fanatic fundamendalist Muslims to carry out the September 11 attacks. Already practically repudiated well before recent events, with the American refusal to join in several international initiatives such as the Kyoto Agreement or the Johannesburg conference, after September 11 it is unlikely that many more compromises will be made to appease "world opinion" — despite the problems this approach creates.

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Although defined by the Cold War, the postwar years were also characterized by an American administration attempting to fine-tune the New Deal — a collectivist project of socio-economic reconstruction that had been strengthened considerably by war mobilization, but remained unable to legitimate itself fully on the basis of those deep-rooted Protestant values of decentralized governance and local self-determination embedded in the US Constitution. Consequently, with the gradual shift from isolationism to imperialism and from *classical* to *managerial* liberalism, which had begun toward the end of the 19th century, but had stalled temporarily in the 1920s (in reaction to WWI), American historiography broke with its traditional exceptionalism. What took its place was a slight variation of the unilinear theory of history espoused by its managerial-liberal and, even more, its former communist opponents. The "pursuit of happiness," previously left to the discretion of particular communities, was redefined in terms of full and equal participation in a well-administered, professionalized society (a euphemism for socialism and social homogenization), projected as the inevitable outcome of all historical developments. As with all secularized versions of the Christian theory of history, deviations from such a path came to be seen as *pathologies* or *breaks*, rather than as legitimate *alternatives*.

On the ideological level, there was a general homogenization of American and European history, which made possible a transposition of European experiences to interpret American realities, and vice-versa. Thus, legitimate political projects concerned with defending traditions and organic social relations, such as those of most branches of American conservatism, were uncritically associated with brutally repressive modernizing ideologies, such as fascism and Nazism, which instrumentalized pseudo-traditions and mythical communities to gain power and legitimacy. Successfully ghettoized by the dominant universalist managerial framework, these legitimate political projects were systematically discredited as obstructions to progress and collective emancipation.[10] Although in economic matters they were mostly 19th century *laissez-faire* liberals, American conservatives who opposed the New Deal's centralization, homogenization, and planning (and, of course, the regulation and containment of capitalism) came to be practically criminalized. According to the standard Marxist reading of fascism and Nazism in Europe, they were seen as obstructions to progress and bent on violating legality

10. See Paul Piccone, "Postmodern Populism," in *Telos* 103 (Spring 1995); and Pierre-André Taguieff, "Political Science Confronts Populism," in the same issue.

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whenever "democratic aspirations" demanded radical socio-economic changes threatening existing relations of privilege (the American version of the Dimitrov model).[11] By the same token, those European conservative thinkers who opportunistically collaborated with fascist or Nazi regimes suffered an even worse fate. Instead of being condemned for attempting to integrate their rather different worldviews into what in 1933 was still a rather vague and heterogeneous Nazi ideology, they were demonized as evil figures whose ideas had actually paved the way for fascist and Nazi regimes by undermining liberal-democratic institutions — especially the legal system — even though their criticism of liberal institutions may have been made within a general liberal framework (as in Schmitt's case), and their understanding of Nazism may have differed fundamentally from what eventually became the official version.

The Politics of the Schmitt Reception

While there are very good reasons to criticize Schmitt and others like him for making terrible political choices in the 1930s, over half a century after the defeat of fascism and Nazism these judgments should not remain obstacles to objective evaluations of their ideas. This has not been the case within "politically correct," universalist, managerial-liberal perspectives. To the extent that, for managerial-liberal thought, fascism and Nazism remain permanent possibilities whenever capitalist development stalls, any conservative thought is a potential threat not only to "progress" and "emancipation," but also to liberal legal frameworks that allow this "progress" and "emancipation" to take place through democratic means. This universalization and inflation of the power of historically specific concepts helps explain both the extraordinary hostility toward Schmitt (and other influential conservative scholars), and why his ideas have generated so much academic interest for a thinker whose work, for the most part, remains inextricably rooted in the German political realities between the two world wars. In creating false fears concerning its contemporary political relevance, these critics have also prevented the articulation of the kind of

11. This interpretation has been thoroughly rejected by recent historiography. For some of the most detailed analyses, see Zeev Sternhell, *Neither Right nor Left* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986); A. James Gregor, *Interpretations of Fascism* (Morristown, NJ: General Learning Press, 1974); Stanley G. Payne, *A History of Fascism* (London: UCL Press, 1995); Roger Griffin, *The Nature of Fascism* (London: Routledge, 1993); Mark Neocleous, *Fascism* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1997). For a comprehensive review of this literature and other related discussions, see Luciano Pellicani, "Was Fascism Revolutionary?" in this issue of *Telos*.

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legitimate criticism that Schmitt's work warrants, as well as an appreciation of his contributions to political philosophy and the history of legal thought.

Although practically nothing had been published in the US on or by Schmitt before 1970, when the first book on Schmitt in English appeared,[12] there now is speculation that not only has there been an uninterrupted "silent dialogue" between leading post-WWII American political thinkers (mostly German émigrés forced out of Nazi Germany) and Schmitt, but that he has had considerable influence on such contemporary American conservative thinkers as Allan Bloom, William Kristol, Newt Gingrich, and Pat Buchanan — all implicitly criminalized as the intellectual storm-troopers of a potentially fascist involution in the US.[13] John McCormick even attempts "to build a bridge between past and present, between interwar German fascism and post-WWII North American conservatism," by showing the nefarious influence of Schmitt on Leo Strauss. Yet, American conservatives[14] have never shown any interest in Schmitt

12. Schwab, *The Challenge of the Exception*, *op. cit.* In the introduction to this text, whose first draft was originally a rejected Ph.D. dissertation, Schwab describes the tribulations he had to endure for daring to deal with Schmitt's ideas in the already "politically correct" climate of Columbia University in the 1960s.

13. John P. McCormick, *Carl Schmitt's Critique of Liberalism: Against Politics as Technology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 15ff. and 302ff. McCormick provides no evidence to support his claim that the conservative thinkers in question ever read Schmitt or in some cases even knew who he was.

14. Paul Gottfried, *Carl Schmitt: Politics and Theory* (Westport: Greenwood, 1990). Despite his numerous criticisms of "liberalism," Gottfried defines himself as a "paleoconservative" in order to distance himself from mainstream American conservatism. He is admittedly a classical 19th century liberal who objects only to the kind of "managerial liberalism" that has gradually displaced classical liberalism in the 20th century. See Paul Gottfried, *After Liberalism: Mass Democracy in the Managerial State* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999). As for "certified" conservative American publications and foundations, they have never paid any attention to Schmitt. In the rare occasions his name comes up, he is summarily dismissed as a Nazi ideologue whose work is automatically assumed to be irrelevant to American politics. In addition to al this, the anti-Schmittians confuse neo-conservatism with conservatism. Not only are the two not the same, but their followers despise each other even more than they despise their Left opponents. McCormick is appalled that Gottfried is so right-wing as to define himself as a "paleoconservative" in contraposition to "neoconservatives." See McCormick, *Carl Schmitt's Critique of Liberalism*, *op. cit.*, p. 15n. Had he attempted to determine the real differences between the two, McCormick would have realized that paleoconservatives differ from neo-conservatives in opposing the kind of managerial liberalism the latter support, in favor of a traditional *laissez-faire* liberalism. Neoconservatives, on the other hand, are dissident managerial liberals who differ from other ordinary managerial liberals only in cultural matters. Even more than what remains of the Left, the Right is also terminally fragmented and unable, except on rare occasions such as during the so-called "Reagan Revolution," to coalesce into any coherent political force. See Paul Piccone, "The Crisis of American Conservatism," in *Telos* 74 (Winter 1987-88), pp. 3-30.

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or his work. It was not until the early 1990s that the only book on Schmitt written by someone associated with the American Right appeared — a scholarly discussion of some of Schmitt's more controversial ideas, making no suggestions about their potential relevance to concrete conservative politics in the US. Rare attempts to even hint at the possible use of Schmitt's ideas in emergency situations in the US, e.g., to justify suspension of "the rule of law,"[15] are ludicrous. Unlike often unstable European parliamentary systems, characterized by historically polarized (but increasingly converging) Left and Right parties, the US has clear-cut procedures in place concerning conflict-resolution during crises. Moreover, there has always been an exceptionally strong political consensus — even at the height of the Viet-Nam War — that readily allows deployment of emergency measures, enacted via standard legal procedures, as evidenced by the few times this has happened, such as the Tonkin Bay Resolution or the passage of questionable anti-terrorist legislation following Sept. 11.

Yet, hostility toward Schmitt's work is so intense that it spills over onto what anti-Schmittians smear as "Schmitt apologists" — those who view Schmitt as someone more interesting and relevant than a mere Nazi ideologue. This intensity cannot be explained solely in terms of differences of scholarly opinion. It is rooted in more subtle political issues.[16] While the motivation seems to be clear, i.e., that the "apology" somehow is related to a diabolical conservative attempt to re-habilitate fascist or Nazi ideology by de-Nazifying Schmitt and legitimating his dangerous ideas, the charge makes no sense and is a typical result of the confusion of European and American political realities. For example, the alleged "apologists" have no connection to conservatism: Joseph W. Bendersky (author of the first intellectual biography of Schmitt in English) has always been a liberal; George Schwab lost several close family members in Nazi camps and cannot possibly be suspected of fascist sympathies; and *Telos* (which published the first special issue on Schmitt in English) has been the main organ of New Left philosophy and theory in the US since 1968. Thus, the conflict of interpretations is not between Left and Right — or between conservatives and managerial liberals — but exclusively between what

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15. See Joseph W. Bendersky, "Carl Schmitt as *Occasio*," in *Telos* 78 (Winter 1988-98), p. 203ff.

16. See Scheuerman, *Carl Schmitt*, *op. cit.*, p. 1; David Dyzenhaus, *Legality and Legitimacy: Carl Schmitt, Hans Kelsen and Hermann Heller in Weimar* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), p. 98ff.; and McCormick, *Carl Schmitt's Critique of Liberalism: Against Politics as Technology*, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

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remains of the Left after the debacle of the New Left in the 1970s and the collapse of the Soviet empire in the late 1980s.

These conflicting interpretations can be traced to a fundamental split[17] that resurfaced after the collapse of New Left expectations, within what has always been a highly heterogeneous Left in the US — a split that dates to the beginning of the socialist movement in the 19th century. It is now reconfigured as a division between two groups. The first consists of those who have sought accommodation with the existing managerial liberalism, reinterpreted as a more palatable version of that same neo-Stalinist collectivist ideology that could not be marketed during the Cold War (and even less after the collapse of "really-existing socialism" in 1989). The second consists of those attempting to transcend the constraints of corrupt Left dogma and to redefine "emancipation" in terms of those Left traditions (such as the anarchists and the Frankfurt School, before its conformist "communicative" involution) historically repressed by a Marxism-Leninism whose positions and ideas had gained hegemony within the Left due to the Soviet Union's prestige as a world power.

Telos' initial interest in Schmitt's work was triggered in the 1980s by the realization, in the wake of the collapse of the New Left and under the influence of Norberto Bobbio's criticism, that the Left in general and Marxism in particular had no political theory.[18] Thus, it was essential to rethink the political framework of a Left that, having been lost for decades in the swamps of Stalinism and their periphery of fellow-travellers, was unable to redefine an autonomous emancipatory program independently of liberal models, totalitarian aberrations, or weaker technocratic variations. This is why the first special issue of a journal[19] devoted entirely to Schmitt's thought was subtitled "Enemy or Foe?" following a standard Schmittian distinction between an "enemy" (*Feind*) worthy of respect as

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17. This split within the Left goes back to fundamental differences between Karl Marx's collectivism and Jean-Pierre Proudhon's federalism, V. I. Lenin's bureaucratic centralism, Gustav Landauer's communitarianism, Rudolf Bahro's really-existing socialism and New Left utopianism. It is what, immediately after WWII, Maurice Merleau-Ponty defined as "Eastern" and "Western" Marxist traditions, and Ernst Bloch identified as "warm" and "cold" streams within Marxism. There is also a tactical continuity between the orthodox Marxist tradition and the new *soi-disant* "liberal-democratic" Schmitt demonizers: whenever unable to exterminate physically or to banish to the Gulag their Left opponents, orthodox Marxist-Leninists also resorted to smears, distortions, and falsifications.

18. See Norberto Bobbio, "Is there a Marxist Theory of the State?" and "Are there Alternatives to Representative Democracy?" both in *Telos* 35 (Spring 1978), pp. 5-16 and 17-30; Frank Adler, "Norberto Bobbio at 80," in *Telos* 82 (Winter 1989-90), pp. 130-133.

19. *Telos* 72 (Summer 1987).

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an equal, and a "foe" (*absolute Feind*, since German does not have a separate word) — an unworthy opponent who must be exterminated.[20] This debate was metaphorically meant to distinguish between continuing the blank condemnation of Schmitt, typical of West German intellectuals unable or unwilling to confront the past independently of imposed Cold War limitations, and to engage in a critical confrontation with his ideas, which kept resurfacing, despite constant dismissals as part of an undifferentiated and vague Nazi ideology. While reminiscent of the more popular Schmittian definition of politics in terms of "friend or enemy," which would have implied acceptance or rejection of Schmitt ideas, the contraposition of "blank condemnation" and "critical discussion" was proposed to open an inquiry free of earlier prejudices and distortions.

The proposal fell on deaf ears. The new American anti-Schmittians not only missed the point, but have succeeded in recasting discussions of Schmitt in sterile and irrelevant post-WWII West German molds reducing Schmitt exclusively to the level of a Nazi theorist. In this bizarre effort to depict Schmitt as a diabolical nemesis committed to the Nazification of the world, even the distinction "friend/enemy" is mistranslated as "friend/foe,"[21] which unintendedly describes correctly the way in which the Schmitt discussion has been reconfigured.

Schmitt's Analysis of the US

Along with most European scholars of his generation, Schmitt did not have any direct experience of *l'Amérique profonde*, and limited himself to discussing the US strictly from the viewpoint of international law and foreign policy. Yet, although these studies — especially those written following his expulsion from the Nazi Party in 1936 — are primarily historical and as tied to immediate political problems as all of his other works, they cover broad time spans and provide heuristic insights into contemporary political predicaments. As a conservative intellectual deeply committed to German interests, Schmitt resented the US for imposing the Versailles Treaty on Germany and consequently devastating the German economy in the early 1920s,[22] for having introduced a

20. See G.L. Ulmen, "Return of the Foe"; and George Schwab, "Enemy or Foe: A conflict of Modern Politics," both in *Telos* 72 (Summer 1987), pp. 187-193 and 194-201.

21. See William E. Scheuerman, *Between the Norm and the Exception, The Frankfurt School and the Rule of Law* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1994), p. 8ff.

22. Cf. Carl Schmitt, "Die Rheinlande als Objekt internationaler Politik," "Der Völkerbund und Europa," and "Völkerrechtliche Formen des modernen Imperialismus," all in Schmitt, *Positionen und Begriffe, op. cit.*, pp. 26-33, 90-94, and 174-180.

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discriminatory concept of war during WWI,[23] and for his own incarceration as a potential war criminal by American occupation forces from September 1945 to March 1947.[24] Nevertheless, he was in awe of the US and its impact on Europe and the rest of the world. He even considered the American Monroe Doctrine, enunciated early in the 19th century, to be the model for a possible new world order based on *Großräume* — although he lamented the fact that the US had abandoned this strategy at the end of the 19th century, and had become an imperialist power.[25] Schmitt's last major work, *Der Nomos der Erde*, describes "the Eurocentric epoch" of world history as beginning with the discovery of America and ending with the rise of the US as a world power.[26]

According to Schmitt, the US was very interested in participating in international economic affairs, while remaining politically distant and thus unaccountable to anyone. This ambiguity of American foreign policy eventually became, and remains, a problem for world order. After the collapse of the Soviet empire, the US became a global system allegedly regulated by a neutral market, but under *de facto* US hegemony. The ambiguity remains.[27] A prime example is the American government's response to the Sept. 11 attacks, which it defines both as (a-political) international criminal deeds and as (political) war acts. Thereby, it introduced a new concept of war and legitimated military intervention anywhere, while

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23. Carl Schmitt, *Die Wendung zum diskriminierende Kriegsbegriff* (Munich: Duncker & Humblot, 1938), and *Das international-rechtliche Verbrechen des Angriffskrieges und der Grundsatz "Nullum crimen, nulla poena sine lege,"* ed. with notes and an epilogue by Helmut Quaritsch (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1994).

24. Cf. Carl Schmitt, *Ex Capitivitate Salus: Erfahrungen der Zeit 1945/47* (Cologne: Greven Verlag, 1950), although Schmitt makes no mention of the US in this work.

25. See G. L. Ulmen, "American Imperialism and International Law: Carl Schmitt on the US in World Affairs," in *Telos* 72 (Summer 1987), pp. 43-71.

26. While many of Schmitt's works written before WWII have been translated into English, almost nothing he wrote thereafter has been either translated or discussed. The translation of the most important of these works, written during WWII and eventually published in 1950, is about to be published: *The* Nomos *of the Earth in the International Law of the* Jus Publicum Europaeum, tr. by G. L. Ulmen (New York: Telos Press, 2002). For rare discussions in English of the significance of this later work, see Giacomo Marramao, "The Exile of the *Nomos*: For a Critical Profile of Carl Schmitt," in *Cardozo Law Review*, Vol. 21, No. 3-4, (May 2000), pp. 1583-1587; and Jean-François Kervégan, "Carl Schmitt and 'World Unity'," in Chantal Mouffe, ed., *The Challenge of Carl Schmitt* (London: Verso, 1999), pp. 54-74. Neither author is American.

27. See Gary Ulmen, "The Military Significance of September 11," in *Telos* 121 (Fall 2001), pp. 174-84. This ambiguity becomes embarrassingly obvious when the enemies captured in battle are described neither as "prisoners of war" — which presupposes participation in a regular war — nor as mere criminals, but as "detainees."

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reserving the right to decide unilaterally which actions to take.

These crucial issues are apparently of little interest to the new Schmitt critics. Instead, they remain obsessed with Schmitt's politics during the Third Reich, and insist on transposing these experiences into an altogether different historical context, while quixotically charging the long-since demolished windmills of Nazi and fascist ideas as hidden intellectual resources for American conservatives.[28] Following in the footsteps (or, rather, missteps) of otherwise respected historians, such as George Mosse,[29] who unwarrantedly charged Schmitt with subscribing to the theory of the Aryan race, or Jeffrey Herf, who insists on reading Schmitt as one of the more irrational "conservative revolutionaries,"[30] these self-appointed ideological gate-keepers[31] have managed to restrict the American reception of Schmitt's ideas to the least relevant of his contributions, inextricably rooted in pre-1936 European realities and impossible to transpose either to an American context or to apply to today's international affairs.[32] Most recent works and discussions are predicated on the unwarranted and unsubstantiated assumption that Schmitt's involvement with Nazism was not merely a matter of opportunism or bad judgement, but the result of a profound affinity between his thought and the ideology

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28. Many of these interpretations of Schmitt as an ideological resource for American conservatives can be traced to Dieter Haselbach's contribution to Klaus Hansen and Hans Lietzmann, eds., *Carl Schmitt und die Liberalismuskritik* (Oplanden: Leske & Budrich, 1988), which first fabricated ideological ties between Schmitt and the American Right. For a devastating critique, see Joseph W. Bendersky, "Carl Schmitt as *Occasio*," *op. cit.*

29. See George L. Mosse, *The Crisis of German Ideology: Intellectual Origins of the Third Reich* (New York: Grossett & Dunlap, 1964); and *Germans and Jews: The Right, the Left, and the Search for a "Third Force" in Pre-Nazi Germany* (New York: Howard Ferting, 1970).

30. See Jeffrey Herf, *Reactionary Modernism: Technology, Culture, and Politics in Weimar and the Third Reich* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984). For an account of the German roots of all this, see Joseph W. Bendersky, "Carl Schmitt and the Conservative Revolution," in *Telos* 72 (Summer 1987), pp. 27-42.

31. See, among others, Scheuerman, *Between the Norm and the Exception, op. cit.*; *Carl Schmitt, op. cit.*; John P. McCormick, *Carl Schmitt's Critique of Liberalism, op. cit.*; David Dyzenhaus, *Legality and Legitimacy: Carl Schmitt, Hans Kelsen and Hermann Heller in Weimar* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997); and Peter C. Caldwell, *Legality and Legitimacy: Carl Schmitt, Hans Kelsen and Hermann Heller* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997).

32. The level of this "scholarship" is so low, and so full of statements about Schmitt's ideas completely at odds with Schmitt's writings, that it is amazing this material is published at all — especially since so many much more accurate accounts are readily available. For example, see Schwab, *The Challenge of the Exception, op. cit.*; and Joseph Bendersky, *Carl Schmitt: Theorist for the Reich* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1883); and Gottfried, *Carl Schmitt, op. cit.*

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the enthymeme that any appropriation of these ideas will probably have the same results they had in Germany in the early 1930s, especially if the US enters into an economic crisis of similar dimensions.

These American anti-Schmittians ignore the fact that Schmitt opposed both the communist and the Nazi parties during the Weimar Republic[34] (and secretly conspired with the German army in Berlin until the very last minute to keep the Nazis out of power);[35] that the Nazis were always suspicious of him as not being a real Nazi; that his emphasis on the *state* rather than on the *party* after Hitler's rise to power resulted in his expulsion from the Nazi Party in 1936;[36] and that thereafter he was under surveillance, had his mail read, and had political observers at his lectures. Disregarding their own claims to be sensitive to socio-historical particularity and cultural specificity, these anti-Schmittians conflate past and present, earlier European realities with contemporary American experiences,[37] and end up projecting the political predicament of Germany in the 1930s onto today's US, which has entirely different political traditions, where fascism has never been a threat, and whose internal conflicts can be understood only by deploying a different conceptual apparatus.

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33. See Mark Neocleous, "Friend or Enemy? Reading Schmitt Politically," in *Radical Philosophy: A Journal of Socialist and Feminist Philosophy,* 79 (Sept/Oct. 1996): "Schmitt's *theoretical* work . . . led him to join the Nazi Party and . . . the *theoretical* presuppositions of his critique of liberalism underlie an essentially fascist political project," p. 14.

34. Cf. in particular, Carl Schmitt, *Legalität und Legitimität* [1932] (Berlin: Duncker und Humblot, 1968).

35. Cf. Lutz Berthold, *Carl Schmitt und der Staatsnotstandsplan am Ende der Weimarer Republik* (Berlin: Duncker und Humblot, 1999).

36. See the official denunciation of Schmitt by Alfred Rosenberg, "Die Staatsrechtslehrer Prof. Dr. Carl Schmitt," published as *Vertraulich. Mitteilungen zur weltanschaulichen Lage. Der Beaufragte des Führers für die Überwachung der gesamten geistigen und weltanschaulichen Erziehung der NSDAP,* Berlin (January 8, 1937), No. 1, Vol. 3, that resulted in Schmitt's expulsion from the Nazi Party. Reprinted in *Zweite Etappe,* Bonn (October 1988). Rosenberg's critique of Schmitt for privileging the state over the party resulted from Rosenberg's anti-Catholicism, according to which the primacy of the state, a secularized transubstantiation of the Church, threatened to marginalize the Nazi Party and to trivialize the race principle.

37. Some of them even insist on the right to "interpret" Schmitt's idea in an "integrative" way, whereby the context becomes irrelevant to the presumed political meaning. In so doing, they are able to deal with his ideas as they see fit. See Dyzenhaus, *op. cit.* For a more extensive critique, see G. L. Ulmen, "'Integrative Jurisprudence' and Other Misdemeanors," in *Texas Law Review,* Vol. 77, No. 4 (March 1999), pp. 1107-1128. Schmitt often insisted that "A historical truth is true only once." See Carl Schmitt, "Die geschictliche Struktur des heutigen Welt-Gegensatzes von Ost und West," in *Freundschaftliche Begegnungen: Festschrift für Ernst Jünger zum 60. Geburtstag* (Frankfurt a/M: Vittorio Klostermann, 1955), p. 147.

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The objective of this inflation of Schmitt's ideas as the possible juridical justification for an ever-present fascist/Nazi threat is to provide increasingly conformist Left academics with the kind of legitimation and content their "emancipatory" socialist ideology needs after bureaucratic centralism became discredited with the collapse of the USSR. Thus, anti-fascism has become the eschatological core of an otherwise vacuous Left ideology now reconfigured as the legitimating arm of the managerial state.[38] No longer able to present themselves as the vanguard of progressive forces paving the way for a bright socialist future, they have now regrouped as part of an academic rear-guard entrusted with protecting "civil society" and liberal values against the market and other forces of darkness — a kind of quixotic *kathekon* seeking to prevent a recurrence of the fascist experience in a context where there has never been any such threat.

The proposed scenario is crystal-clear: during economic crises, Schmitt can provide "neo-conservative forces"[39] with the intellectual resources needed to justify suspension of "the rule of law" and, as in the case of the Weimar Republic, to deploy repressive measures necessary to uphold existing relations of domination threatened by "democratic" forces demanding containment or overthrow of capitalism.[40] Translated into American political realities, where there is hardly a peep anywhere

38. Here also, the new Schmitt critics uncritically recycle European experiences in a context in which they make absolutely no political sense. Unable to fill its version of "really existing socialism" with any content or goals, already in the 1960s the East German Communist Party had hypostatized anti-fascism to the level of an official state religion.

39. McCormick practically criminalizes "neo-conservatism" as a precursor of fascism (*ibid.*, pp. 302ff.); while, historically, American conservatives have been some of the most outspoken defenders of "the rule of law." Unlike European conservatives still tied nostalgically to the *ancien régime*, American conservatives never had a feudal order to vindicate, and, consequently, operate entirely within the parameters of "bourgeois" legality. On the differences between traditional European conservatives and their American counterparts, see Panajotis Kondylis, *Konservatismus: Geschichtlicher Gehalt und Untergang* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1986).

40. Generalizing Otto Kirchheimer's and Franz Neumann's account of the crisis of Weimar and the rise of Nazism, Scheuerman writes about today's "one-sidedness and viciousness of the right-wing attack on the welfare state." While he realizes that these attacks, by no means as "vicious and one-sided" as he claims, have really been directed against an increasingly insensitive, unaccountable, and inefficient bureaucracy, he proposes this scenario as a model to analyze the decline of the welfare state which, presumably, now lies in ruin — despite the fact that under the Reagan administration, and even more with subsequent ones, welfare spending has grown considerably. See Scheuerman, *Between the Norm and the Exception*, *op. cit.*, pp. 240ff. According to Richter, however, these explanations cannot *totally* account for "the sudden rise of the Schmitt reception." See Richter, *op. cit.*, p. 1624. After rambling for several pages about "liberal republicanism," Richter forgets to provide any more satisfactory explanation.

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into American political realities, where there is hardly a peep anywhere about socialism (except for a few "politically correct" academic islands), this model ends up ascribing to "democratic forces" a defensive role: to prevent the alleged roll-back of the welfare state and to oppose other austerity policies under the Reagan and succeeding administrations. Plausible as an account of what may have taken place in some Third World countries, e.g., Chile in the early 1970s,[41] whose economy was about to be destroyed by the introduction of "socialist planning" and the nationalization of private enterprises, this worn-out Diamat model makes no sense when projected onto the US.

The Fascist Threat

According to McCormick: "Fascism . . . has not been locked away forever but rather lives on — not only in 'developing' areas of South America, Africa, and Eastern Europe, but elsewhere in Europe and in the United States."[42] Alleged evidence for this claim is an unsubstantiated resurgence of "neo-Nazism, militia movements, 'Christian identity' ideologies, ethnic cleansing, racially motivated mass rape, violent attacks on immigrant workers and foreigners, bombing of abortion clinics and state administrative buildings, and assasination of the proponents of peace."[43] Such frightening scenarios, however, can only be the inventions of a paranoid imagination. Nothing of the kind has occurred recently in either the US or Western Europe. Some of these horrible, scattered events have occurred in remote parts of the globe during the past few years, largely in connection with brutal civil wars in pre-modern societies being forced to become nations in the post-colonial era. They cannot be taken out of context and projected indiscriminately onto advanced industrial societies.

41. Unlike American anti-Schmittians, who see the US through Weimar lenses, the Chilean-Canadian anti-Schmittian, Renato Cristi, operating within the horizon of recent Chilean history, sees Schmitt as an authoritarian liberal critic of democracy. See Renato Cristi, *Carl Schmitt and Authoritarian Liberalism*: *Strong State, Free Society* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1998). But democracy takes many forms, and while the kind of *plebiscitary* democracy Schmitt seemed to prefer may be the one best suited as the foundation for what he called "sovereign dictatorship" (and was effectively instrumentalized by Nazi, fascist, and communist regimes), it can be regarded as a deformation of *direct* democracy, and thus not much less "democratic" than modern *representative* democracy, manipulated by lobbies and particular interests within a *de facto* corporatist framework. *Real* democracy, i.e., direct democracy, is impossible in a national context, and, at best, practical only in federal contexts based on small units, such as the traditional town meetings, still held throughout rural America.

42. McCormick, *Carl Schmitt's Critique of Liberalism, op. cit.*, p. 12.

43. *Ibid.*, p. 305.

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(The Middle East is a special case). Crime statistics in the US have been going down for the past several years, and, except for exceptional terrorist acts such as those on Sept. 11 or other scattered incidents, the country has not been this safe and peaceful in many years.

While some of the horrors McCormick lists, such as ethnic cleansing and racially motivated mass rape, occurred briefly in places such as Bosnia or remote corners of Africa, it is absurd to claim that this is happening or is likely to happen in the foreseeable future in North America or Europe. While there have been some occasional outbursts of neo-Nazism in places such as Germany, Great Britain, and Russia, by numerically irrelevant and politically meaningless gangs, it is preposterous to think that wannabe-Hitlers are everywhere. The success of the various Le Pens, Haiders, Bossis, *et. al.* represent, at best, vague populist protests easily coopted within mainstream political parties. Even the Oklahoma City bombing, no matter how misguided and deplorable it was, cannot be associated with anything resembling fascism. It was planned and executed as revenge for the Waco incident and, more generally, as revenge for what the perpetrators interpreted to be an unconstitutional power grab by the federal government. If anything, it could be construed as a misguided reaction against what was misperceived as "fascist" abuses by the American government.[44] But this is the real problem with the anti-Schmittians demonization of both Schmitt and fascism: a profound misunderstanding of fascism as a concrete historical phenomenon and its interpretation through a crude Marxist philosophy of history predicated on the inevitability of "progress."

McCormick's approach, shared by Scheuerman, Dyzenhaus, and others, deals with fascism as "attempts to stake out secure positions against the rapidly changing socioeconomic landscape in the supposedly timeless entities of family, nation, and faith."[45] This is a variation on the old Diamat account of the historically obsolete relations of production clashing with

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44. Spectacular cases, such as the Waco and Ruby Ridge incidents, often used as examples of far Right threats, have nothing to do with "fascism." The religious fundamentalists in Waco simply wanted to be able to live according to their reading of the Bible, while at Ruby Ridge it was a matter of not wanting to recognize government authorities. In neither case was there any reference to fascism. If anything, these incidents can be read as *resistance* against what at the time was perceived to be a usurpation of power by a federal government insensitive to traditional American constitutional rights of free speech and free association. See John Bokina, "Holocaust at Mount Carmel," in *Telos* 105 (Fall 1995), pp. 133-142.

45. McCormick, *Carl Schmitt's Critique of Liberalism*, *op. cit.*, p. 313. What McCormick actually describes is not fascism, but traditionalism. Despite its appeals to whatever it could use from the past, fascism was a modernizing ideology ready to destroy or recycle any traditions that stood in its path. Neither Dyzenhaus nor Scheuerman bother to define fascism.

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the new forces of production. As a result, existing social relations (capitalism) refuse to adapt to new realities by implementing fundamental changes (presumably, the institutionalization of socialism), thus precipitating the suspension of "the rule of law," the imposition of authoritarian measures, and the suppression of democracy. From this viewpoint, far from being another modernizing ideology — no matter how brutal and destructive it may have been — fascism is the last resort for conservative forces seeking to retain existing relations of privilege that stand in the way of human emancipation.[46] This is why so much effort is exerted to demonstrate a non-existent connection between Schmitt's ideas and those of American conservatives, presumably caught in the same bind as German capitalists during the last days of the Weimar Republic, when "progressive forces" allegedly threatened German relations of production (capitalism).[47] When push comes to shove and the existing legal structure ("the rule of law") becomes an obstacle to an effective defense of the *status quo*, then Schmitt's theories concerning the state of exception and other legal means to remove any obstacles preventing the implementation of outright authoritarian measures become essential to conservative political strategies. This is why it is necessary to checkmate Schmitt's influence before it becomes a powerful weapon in the hands of threatened capitalists, allegedly ins ensitive to liberal institutions and fundamental freedoms. This is also why the defense of "the rule of law" is of such importance: allegedly, Schmitt's ideas provide the theoretical tools to

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46. This is close to Mosse's interpretation of Nazism in his last books on the subject. See Mosse, *Germans and Jews*, *op. cit.* Whereas, in his earlier work, Mosse had seen Nazism as a *völkisch* ideology reacting against modernization and the traditional bourgeois values it spread, later, after he "came out of the closet" and almost as an attempt to reinterpret that same history from a post-bourgeois relativist perspective, he saw it as the opposite: as the extreme extension of these same values now castigated as terminally repressive. See David Gross, "Between Myth and Reality: George L. Mosse's Confrontation with History," in *Telos* 119 (Spring 20001), pp. 167ff. Neither of Mosse's accounts is very convincing.

47. The question of how much support German conservatives provided the Nazi regime remains unresolved. A few years ago, however, efforts to prove that conservative German industrialists were fully behind the Nazi regime — such as David Abraham, *The Collapse of the Weimar Republic: Political Economy and Crisis* (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1989) — were exposed as fraudulent. For a refutation of Abraham's thesis, see Gerald D. Feldman, "A Collapse of Weimar Scholarship," and "A Response to David Abraham's Reply," in *Central European History*, Vol. XVII, Nos. 2/3 (June/September 1984), pp. 159-177 and 245-267 respectively. For more credible accounts of the relation of big business and Nazism and fascism, see Henry A. Turner, *German Big Business and the Rise of Hitler* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985); and Piero Melograni, *Gli industriali e Mussolini* (Milan: Longanesi, 1972).

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legitimate setting aside the rule of law, thus paving the way for the worst forms of authoritarian regimes.

The Rule of Law and its Foundations

Dyzenhaus' *Legality and Legitimacy* provides a paradigmatic example of this predicament. Like Scheuerman, Dyzenhaus is particularly interested in the liberal "rule of law," which, in his view, was promoted by the likes of Hans Kelsen and Hermann Heller, but not by Schmitt, who allegedly politicized law in order to destroy it. In Anglo-American "common law," legal indeterminacy is resolved by granting a great deal of latitude to judges (who are elected, rather than appointed, as in the continental system of codified law), thus privileging *democracy* over *liberal principles*, and empowering a jury of one's peers (who presumably embody the spirit of the people). In contrast, "the rule of law" is positive law enacted and applied by professionals committed to follow objectified principles of justice, presumably universally valid and independent of the wills of any particular community (the primacy of *liberalism* over *democratic* self-determination).

Yet, Schmitt never sought to politicize law. The objective was to put it on more solid foundations ("concrete orders") than mere abstract principles, whose fundamental indeterminacy had facilitated the Nazi rise to power. Both Kelsen's and Heller's concepts of the "rule of law" presupposed a stable constitutional order, which did not exist during the Weimar Republic. Schmitt's theories addressed precisely such an unstable situation by emphasizing and promoting reference to the socio-historical and cultural foundations of law.[48]

Both Scheuerman's and Dyzenhaus' focus on the "rule of law"[49] (that Schmitt allegedly opposed) is meant to protect against fascist and Nazi arbitrariness. For them, the traditions and customs that define communities are what they were for Enlightenment ideologues just before the French Revolution: so much superstition and myth able to justify anything, including Nazi racial views and the institutionalization of anti-Semitism.

48. Dyzenhaus, however, reads Kelsen against himself to make his point, i.e., he interprets Kelsen's theories more concretely than most Kelsen enthusiasts would allow, and actually accepts some of Schmitt's criticisms of Kelsen. Heller is Dyzenhaus' real hero, which is why he avoids any mention of the proto-fascist elements in Heller's thought, while defending Heller's claim that Schmitt's aim was a fascist state. See Dyzenhaus, *Legality and Legitimacy, op. cit.*, pp. 98-101.

49. *Ibid.*, pp. 213ff. and Scheuerman, *Between the Norm and the Exception*, *op. cit.*, pp. 68ff.

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Scheuerman indicts all American political realists (including Hans Morgenthau) as crypto-Nazis for allegedly following in Schmitt's footsteps in advocating the "end of law."[50] Dyzenhaus emphasizes what he calls the "legitimacy of legality," which was Heller's view, and consequently disregards the fact that it was precisely this type of positivistic "legality," predicated on the arbitrary will of legislators and jurists uprooted from their cultural moorings, that had brought Hitler to power, and that Schmitt had warned against.

Following the discredited analyses of 1950s "end of ideology" sociologists and historians, such as Richard Hofstadter, Seymour Martin Lipset, and Daniel Bell, which practically identified traditional American commitments to *direct* democracy with fascist reaction,[51] McCormick is even more explicit in identifying popular will (democracy) as tendentially fascist: allegedly, popular culture in the US and abroad exhibits "an intensifying fundamentalism, in many respects frighteningly reminiscent of Schmitt's fascism." Reacting against "the rapidly changing socioeconomic landscape," people gravitate toward fascism when they vindicate the primacy of "family, nation, and faith"[52] — the institutional framework within which people normally operate and which gives meaning to their lives. Suddenly, "family, nation, and faith" are suspect. It is "the socio-economic landscape" that is primary (the mythical Marxist forces of production that are not being allowed to determine the cultural superstructure as mandated by historical materialism), i.e., a truth more true than the lifeworld of ordinary people, whose democratic prerogatives are legitimate only when they happen to result in the politically correct choices deducible from abstract liberal principles. Democratic choices are legitimate only when they are in step with the otherwise inevitable march of "progress." They become tendentially fascist when they insist on defending traditions and lifestyles that are anathema to new "socioeconomic landscapes" defined by whatever new cultural fads happen to be celebrated by Hollywood and a culture industry concerned primarily with advertising commodities that can be produced and marketed profitably. Forgotten here is the historical fact that it was precisely Protestant fundamentalists committed to defending their

50. Cf. Scheuerman, *Carl Schmitt, op. cit.*

51. See Christopher Lasch, *The True and Only Heaven: Progress and its Critics* (New York: W.W. Horton, 1991), pp. 424ff.; and *The Revolt of the Elites and the Betrayal of Democracy* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1995). See also Piccone, "Postmodern Populism," *op. cit.*, pp. 45-86.

52. McCormick, *Carl Schmitt's Critique of Liberalism*, *op. cit.*, p. 313.

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traditions and customs that laid the foundations for the new social arrangements they institutionalized in the US. Objectified into concrete political forms, such as the US Constitution, this worldview hypostatized tolerance and the various liberties guaranteed by the "Bill of Rights" as the new country's most coveted principles, precisely in order to protect those who, unwilling to conform to the predominant "socioeconomic landscape" of the societies they had left behind, sought legal protections for their traditional lifestyles.

Universalized out of their cultural and historical context, these traditional liberal values are no longer seen as the particular achievement of a particular people. Rather, they are viewed as absolute norms and inviolable principles derived from the kind of rationality accessible only by New Class intellectuals, experts and professionals, whose objectification in "the rule of law" can override any allegedly "fascist" choice, no matter how much democratic legitimacy they may have. As in the theological critique of idolatry, the *idol* displaces the *spirit,* and precipitates the kind of reification identified so forcefully by Western Marxists and other critics as the fundamental problem of modern society. Along with any fundamentalism that refuses to regard itself as binding only for those willingly adhering to its norms, a "rule of law" deduced from allegedly apodictic rational principles chokes democratic prerogatives and, because of its inescapable in determinacy, p aves t he w ay f or a rbitrary int erpretations, instrumentalizations, and the worst possible excesses.

Schmitt was aware of this problem, especially after the Weimar Republic's disintegration into the Third Reich. This is why, unlike Kelsen and Heller, he always saw "the legal order" in concrete terms, grounded in the traditions and customs of the society that enacted it, rather than in terms of liberal legality predicated on ever growing legislative mandates (what Schmitt called "motorized legislation"). After he became acquainted with Maurice Hauriou's work,[53] in the late 1920s, Schmitt began to emphasize the pre-legal institutional framework that he characterized as "concrete order." Soon after the Nazis came to power, Schmitt, in an ultimately failed attempt to contain them, elaborated on this broader

53. In the second edition of his essay on the concept of the political, Schmitt mentions the two types of juridical thinking he had elaborated with reference to Hobbes — normativism and decisionism — and added a third type — institutionalism — which he derived from his understanding of "institutional guarantees" (of the constitutional order) in German jurisprudence, and from Hauriou's theory of institutions. See Carl Schmitt, *Der Begriff des Politischen* (Berlin: Duncker und Humblot, 1933); the introduction is dated November 1933.

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understanding of juridical thinking, by emphasizing the primacy of the state — and the traditional values it embodied — over the Nazi Party.[54] Among other things, this is one of the main reasons why he was eventually thrown out of the Nazi Party in 1936.

According to Scheuermann: "The concrete-order theory . . . represents the perfect theoretical expression of Schmitt's hostility to liberal conceptions of a system of codified, general law. Its underlying insight is that society needs to be conceived as a series of variegated communities or 'orders' having highly specific needs resistant to codification by general legal norms or concepts."[55] But Schmitt never saw "concrete orders" as intrinsically recalcitrant to codification. Yet, codification is impossible apart from a pre-given, concrete axiological dimension. And even in the case of the most successful codification, to the extent that general legal norms cannot cover all possibilities (in particular, the exception), they constantly need to refer to a pre-legal dimension in order to resolve this indeterminacy.[56]

The Critique of Technology

There is absolutely nothing "fascist" about all this. Unless categorical objectifications (including, first and foremost, the legal order) are grounded in some pre-conceptual dimension, the system of which they are a part tends to self-destruct. This is a predicament that, in some way or other, was confronted by some of the best minds of Schmitt's generation as they sought to solve related problems. This is the context defining, among others, Theodor W. Adorno's articulation of identity logic, Edmund Husserl's critique of naturalism, John Dewey's account of the naturalistic fallacy, Ludwig Wittgenstein's vindication of the primacy of

54. Carl Schmitt, *Über die drei Arten des rechtswissenschaftlichen Denkens* (Hamburg: Hanseatische Verlagsanstalt, 1934); and *Staat, Bewegung, Volk: Die Dreilegung der politischen Einheit* (Hamburg: Hanseatische Verlagsanstalt, 1933).

55. Scheuerman, *Carl Schmitt*, *op. cit.*, pp. 122-23.

56. The Nazis considered Article 48 of the Weimar Constitution and Schmitt's concept of the state, rather than democracy, to be the main obstacles to their rise to power. According to the *Mitteilungen*, *op. cit.*, for Schmitt the state is a secularized derivative of the Catholic Church. Thus, the hypostatization of the state over people and party clashed with what National Socialism stood for, since it ultimately sought to displace the primacy of race in favor of theological principles as the foundation of Nazism. To the extent that Rosenberg saw the Catholic Church, even more than Jews, as a threat to Nazism, it is understandable why his reading of Schmitt as a Catholic apologist contributed to Schmitt's expulsion from the Party — even more than Waldemar Gurian's exposés of Schmitt as not sufficiently anti-Semitic. See Alfred Rosenberg, *The Myth of the Twentieth Century: An Evaluation of the Spiritual-Intellectual Confrontation of Our Age* (Newport Beach, CA: Noontide Press, 1993).

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forms of life, or Alfred North Whitehead's warnings about misplaced concreteness. As in the case of the unabridgeable gap obtaining between legal structures and all the concrete cases they must cover, being and thought do not and cannot correspond. Being always exceeds thought, and the elimination of the resulting residue by Enlightenment ideology leads to thought redefinition being done exclusively in terms of its abstract concepts (identity logic). The result is an ungrounded rationalism articulated through instrumental reason that can accommodate any political agenda, and can turn into the mad rationality typical of Nazi ideology.[57] The only solution is to ground this rationalism in the pre-rational and pre-conceptual dimension that has become occluded or forgotten: through *mimesis* for Adorno; in the lifeworld for Husserl; in experience for Dewey; in "concrete orders" for Schmitt, by returning to Being for Heidegger, in "forms of life" for Wittgenstein, etc.

All of this is part of the critique of technology by Heidegger, Schmitt, and many other conservative thinkers, and it has little to do with computers or machinery, which are indicted only when they contribute to this kind of "forgetting." It is a critique of "the forgetting of Being," or of becoming unable to think beyond prefabricated conceptual structures that have lost touch with their grounding and, therefore, can readily be instrumentalized by, e.g., the culture industry or totalitarian regimes. It is also a critique of that same "alienation" that a few original Marxist thinkers who managed to survive Stalinism began to articulate after WWII, following the publication of Marx's *Economic-Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844*, and which had such an impact on the New Left in the 1960s.[58] The notorious pessimism and elitism of the Frankfurt School was due primarily to their inability to envision how these conditions could be reversed, so that concrete being, and not its abstract otherness, could be accessed by means other than that art and philosophy practiced only by a few artists and intellectuals (Adorno).[59] Other critics were somewhat more optimistic in proposing solutions, such as a return to the ever-available pre-conceptual lifeworld (Husserl),[60] by privileging experience over purely

57. See Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, tr. by John Cumming (New York: Continuum, 1988).

58. See, e.g., Herbert Marcuse, "On the Philosophical Foundations of the Concept of Labor in Economics" (1933), in *Telos* 16 (Summer 1073), pp. 9-37.

59. Theodor W. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, tr. by Christian Lenhardt (London and Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984).

60. Edmund Husserl, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*, tr. by David Carr (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1970).

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instrumental concepts (Dewey),[61] and by emphasizing "forms of life" over "forms of thought" (Wittgenstein).[62] Even Georg Lukács defined the concreteness necessary for a viable materialist analysis — something that an alienated social-democratic thought terminally fragmented by positivism was no longer able to deliver — in terms of relation to a totality in which being and thought were dialectically related.[63]

The critique of legal positivism or of "the rule of law" proceeds along these lines. Predicated on a set of abstract norms, the managerial-liberal "rule of law" is subject to a variety of interpretations, some of which can end up legitimating practically anything, including Nazi racial policies. The dialectic of enlightenment unfolds precisely by such a diabolical reversal of abstract rationality into myths much worse than those supposedly left behind, and with much more disastrous consequences. Grounded in nothing but its pretenses to embody universally valid and apodictic truths or the arbitrary whims of legislators representing particularistic interests, the managerial-liberal rule of law can readily legitimate the most racist of policies by hypostatizing the inferiority or even intrinsic evil of particular groups, instead of preferring the similarly abstract assumption of the equality of humankind. Adorno's *mimesis* as a means to access an uncontaminated dimension able to resolve indeterminacy and arbitrariness is not all that different from Schmitt's recourse to concrete orders as the horizon allowing for a resolution of the problem of legal indeterminacy.[64] And Schmitt also drew conclusions similar to Adorno's concerning the logic that facilitated the advent of Nazism. According to Schmitt, it was precisely the inability to deal with the indeterminacy of managerial-liberal law that brought Hitler to power.[65] A post-liberal alternative to legal positivism was not an option, but a necessity. It was the only way to salvage what he could from the ruins of Weimar.

Schmitt understood law to be more than a mere aggregation of

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61. John Dewey, *Experience and Nature* (Chicago: Open Court, 1971).

62. See Henry McDonald, "Wittgenstein, Narrative Theory, and Cultural Studies," in *Telos* 121 (Fall 2001), pp. 11-54.

63. See Georg Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness: Studies in Marxist Dialectics*, tr. by Rodney Livingstone (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1971).

64. These concrete orders are already built into Anglo-Saxon common law in its emphasis on legal precedents, electing rather than appointing judges, privileging the opinions of juries, etc. — all conduits to those living traditions and customs not readily accessible to conceptual formalization.

65. Carl Schmitt, "Das Problem der Legalität" (1950), in Schmitt, *Verfassungrechtliche Aufsätze aus den Jahren 1924-1954: Materialen zu einer Verfassungslehre* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1978), pp. 440-451.

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abstract rules. Already in 1934, in re-examining the history of law, he argued that the meaning of the Greek concept of *nomos* is not law, rule, or norm, but above all *order*, by which he meant that any domestic legal order must be based on something more than mere rules.[66] Given the unstable constitutional predicament of the Weimar Republic and European public life after WWI, Schmitt sought a concrete foundation for law, able to withstand unstable social and economic conditions and the vagaries of politics — even more so after the Nazi's rise to power, when the regime's arbitrariness may have been contained by reference to more solid groundings than racial myths. He had no intention of politicizing law, but rather sought to ground it in the lifeworld of a particular people.[67] As he often reiterated, all law makes sense only at a particular time and in a particular place. Clearly, if concrete orders such as tradition, family, community, and faith are regarded as the building blocks of fascism, then most societies have been "fascist" since time immemorial. No legitimate legal order can be abstracted from these "concrete orders" without law deteriorating into the abstract and instrumental tool of any party, as it did with the Nazi Party in Germany and with the Communist Party in the Soviet Union.

The Critique of Liberalism

The anti-Schmittians' notion of "fascism" has little to do with Italian fascism or German Nazism, but is a convenient label to discredit all thinkers and movements considered to be "anti-liberal." Similarly, the label "anti-liberal" bears little relation to critics of classical liberalism as a political system, but refers instead to critics of managerial liberalism, all of whom are immediately considered by managerial liberals to be enemies — or, rather, *foes* — of liberalism.[68] By liberalism, the anti-Schmittians really mean a managerial liberalism regulating the welfare state or social-democracy. Historically, even within classical liberalism, there

66. Carl Schmitt, "Über die Bedeutung des Wortes Nomos," in *Der Nomos der Erde im Völkerrecht des Jus Publicum Europaeum* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1974), pp. 36-47.

67. At the end of WWII, when the social fabric of Germany and Europe had been all but destroyed, he sought such a grounding in the earlier tradition of Roman law. See Carl Schmitt, "The Plight of European Jurisprudence," in *Telos* 83 (Spring 1990), pp. 39ff.

68. According to Gottfried, the emergence of "an antiliberal enemy in the form of fascism . . . provided feuding liberals with a welcome source of unity." Since then, there has been a tendency to brand all opponents of liberalism as "fascists" or even Nazis. "Such *argumenta ad Hitlerum* have characterized the charge of antiliberalism brandished by liberal advocates since the forties." See Paul Edward Gottfried, *After Liberalism: Mass Democracy in the Managerial State* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999), pp. 4-5. See also Alain de Benoist, *Communisme et nazisme* (Paris: Labyrinthe, 1998).

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were significant differences between, e.g., the European and the American varieties. Even within European liberalism, German liberalism was a special case — a particularly weak one — which is precisely the predicament Schmitt addressed.[69] However, these particular weaknesses of German liberalism were general "liberal" weaknesses and, therefore, Schmitt's critique of liberalism was not necessarily limited only to Germany, but applied to Europe in general. He was not impressed by the "liberal state," which he considered to be a political fiction masquerading as a fact. This is why he sought to encourage liberals to think "politically." According to Leo Strauss, Schmitt was not an enemy of liberalism, but rather a critic of the *failure* of liberalism.[70] For Schmitt, liberalism, the high point of modernity, is characterized by the *negation* of the political — a serious problem especially for Germany after WWI, when its sovereignty was jeopardized by the Treaty of Versailles. More generally, however, this decline of the political was not an accident, but liberalism's original goal. Thus, if liberalism had lost its way, it had to be replaced by some other system difficult to prefigure at that time.[71]

Often misunderstood as a critique of Schmitt, Strauss' essay is primarily explanatory, i.e., emphasizing what Schmitt had assumed, but not explicitly stated. Thus, American anti-Schmittians are correct in claiming that in many respect Strauss agreed with Schmitt. Strauss recognized that,

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69. Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political* [1932], tr. by George Schwab (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996)

70. Guido de Ruggiero distinguished among English, French, German, and Italian liberalism, and saw Germany as a particularly weak case: "The Germans have not lived in the political atmosphere in which their great State organization ought to have been steeped; this organization has remained isolated, in a rarefied atmosphere in comparison with States like England and France which have behind them a great political tradition. From this point of view, the disastrous tendency of the Germans to state every controversial question in terms of military force may be explained as a symptom of their political weakness." See Guido de Ruggiero, *The History of European Liberalism*, tr. by R. G. Collingwood (Boston: Beacon Press, 1959), p. 271. In a similar vein, in the 1940s Hallowell pointed out that, with the Nazi rise to power, German liberal institutions "collapsed like a house of cards. . . No nation . . . would calmly submit . . . to the wanton destruction of political institutions if these were securely and deeply rooted in the spiritual consciousness of the people. That it was possible . . . is eloquent testimony to the degeneracy of German postwar liberalism." Thus: "liberalism was not murdered . . . but it committed suicide." Its demise "is to be attributed less to the machinations of Hitler and the National Socialists than to the liberals themselves." See John H. Hallowell, *The Decline of Liberalism as an Ideology, with Particular Reference to German Politico-Legal Thought* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1943), pp. vii.-viii.

71. Leo Strauss, "Comments on Carl Schmitt's *Der Begriff des Politischen*," published as an appendix to Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, *op. cit.*, pp. 82ff.

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despite all its defects, the "astoundingly consistent system of liberal thought" had yet to be displaced by another one. Unlike the enemies of liberalism, such as fascists and Nazis, who had an alternative to it, Schmitt did not. Thus, according to Strauss, Schmitt's critique of liberalism is an internal one that "takes place within the horizon of liberalism."[72] Whatever "illiberal tendencies" there may have been, they were "arrested by the as yet undefeated 'systematics of liberal thinking'. . . [Schmitt's] intention was to do no more than provide 'a theoretical framework for an immense problem'." No matter how general, Schmitt's critique was focused specifically on Weimar Germany, and was never meant to be extended to American liberalism or "liberal-democracy" — a term he would have found a *contradictio ad absurdum*. While he did criticize the kind of liberal universalism being promoted at the time by the League of Nations and American imperialism, his main focus remained always on the weaknesses of German liberalism at that time.

This weak liberal system was eventually displaced through what James Burnham called the "managerial revolution,"[73] by a new class of state administrators who gained political power by manipulating popular rhetoric and egalitarian slogans. This feature was shared by Soviet communism, National Socialism, and welfare-state democracy. More to the point, liberalism survived as a series of social programs informed by a vague egalitarian spirit, and totalized by its opposition to anti-liberal critics. According to Gottfried: "By the end of the twentieth century, liberalism has become a pillar of whatever liberal democracy the United States and its imitators are thought to embody,"[74] while the "consolidation of the managerial state and the imposition of its pluralist ideology" had become "the defining features of contemporary Western life."[75] More precisely, managerial liberalism has given way to a managerial democracy within which liberal principles, such as freedom of speech and association, are readily set aside whenever political expediency

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72. *Ibid.*, p. 105

73. Cf. James Burnham, *The Managerial Revolution: What Is Happening in the World* (New York, The John Day Company, 1941). The theme of the New Class, of course, had already been articulated much earlier by Bakunin, Majaisky, etc.

74. Gottfried, *After Liberalism*, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

75. *Ibid.*, p. 140. Gottfried concludes that "Schmitt has been right in at least two of his interpretive assumptions. One is that liberalism and democracy belong to two different epochs, one to the nineteenth century and the other to the twentieth. The . . . merging of these ideas and movements into 'liberal democracy' has brought forth not a true refinement of democratic practice but a garbling of political concepts. . . . "

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requires it.[76] Schmitt realized the extent to which civil society already had penetrated the state, and vice-versa. His focus, however, especially after 1936, was entirely on international relations and the defense of the political as a defining dimension of national sovereignty, which helps explain the main reasons for his critique of liberalism and his unwillingness to speculate about possible replacements.

Since the American anti-Schmittians claim that Schmitt was already a fascist or a Nazi during the Weimar Republic, they cannot accept Strauss' analysis, and attack him too. Thus, McCormick claims to read Schmitt "against himself," while holding him "accountable for the many distortions and misrepresentations of the Enlightenment tradition to which he so often resorts in his writings."[77] While Cristi brands as "apologists" all those who argue that Schmitt's Nazi career resulted from a flawed moral character, and contends that Schmitt embaced Nazi racist policies, his reconstruction resembles that of the "apologists." Accordingly, he claims that only "contempt for the reality of the political would allow one to pretend that a system of legality could sustain itself and maintain no reference to a substantive order of things. If liberalism were to be identified with this apolitical view, then Schmitt was an unswerving critic; if liberalism were to restrict its apoliticism to the sphere of civil society, and to acknowledge the necessity of a sovereign state that retained the monopoly of the political, Schmitt would not object to conservative or authoritarian liberalism."[78]

Cristi acknowledges that Schmitt was primarily concerned with securing the state's autonomy, and that there is nothing "totalitarian" about this: "A strong state . . . did not imply cancelling civil society's own independence. If totalitarianism means that the state ultimately assimilates and metabolizes civil society, at no point of his intellectual development did Schmitt espouse a totalitarian view. On the contrary, he thought

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76. No matter how abhorrent, tolerance for "hate speech" and the right not to associate with whomever one wishes has nothing to do with Nazism, fascism, or communism, but are part of the price to be paid for upholding liberal ideals. The ease with which both liberal tenets, along with others, are set aside, indicate the gulf between classical liberalism and the managerial democracy that has displaced it.

77. McCormick, *Carl Schmitt's Critique of Liberalism*, *op. cit.*, p. 7. Mention of the Enlightenment is telling, since none of the anti-Schmittians buy into the critique of the Enlightenment developed by Horkheimer and Adorno, as well as by Schmitt and most German conservatives. *Ibid.*, p. 90 and 90n. McCormick mentions *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, although his discussion is lost in a fog of Nietzsche, technology, and myth, and refers readers to Jürgen Habermas' "reworking" of the thesis.

78. Cristi, *Carl Schmitt and Authoritarian Liberalism*, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

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that an autonomous state would prove its strength by affirming the freedom and autonomy of civil society."[79] This is why Cristi criticizes Heinreich Meier's reading of Schmitt as an anti-liberal and a religious thinker, and the attempt to contrapose Schmitt to Strauss.[80]

All American anti-Schmittians thank each other, quote each other, and compliment each other. They all tackle subjects that have been dealt with by experts, but ignore these works with a trick that, for lack of a better term, Dyzenhaus calls "integrative jurisprudence," i.e., they abstract from the historical context of Schmitt's writings in order to deal with his ideas as they see fit. When the facts do not fit Dyzenhaus' thesis, he deploys what he calls "deep structure" analysis, and when Schmitt's writings do not prove his case, he speculates that "it must have followed" or "he must have meant." Thus, allegedly, Schmitt's emphasis on the primacy of the state during the crisis of the Weimar Republic "connected his 1917 work on dictatorship (administration as *Urzustand*, or original state of affairs), to his 1931-32 search for the state's substance in authoritarian executive control free from pluralistic party influence, to his 1935-36 theoretical and historical work on the 'concrete order' of the Nazi state."[81]

Similarly, Peter Caldwell presents Schmitt as an advocate of dictatorship and as the enemy of democracy from the very beginning of his career. This means that Schmitt was conspiring to undermine the Weimar Republic even before it existed. Caldwell claims that conservative historiography "obscures the way one's concept of constitutional democracy, associated with Carl Schmitt and Chancellor von Papen, undermined other aspects of the Weimar Constitution, and thus laid the groundwork for the Nazi takeover."[82] Schmitt, however, was not associated with

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79. *Ibid.*, p. 5.

80. Cristi, *Carl Schmitt and Authoritarian Liberalism*, *op. cit.*, pp. 171-72. McCormick also criticizes Meier, but his discussion is colored by his effort to make Schmitt an enemy, rather than merely a critic of liberalism. See McCormick, *Carl Schmitt's Critique of Liberalism*, *op. cit.*, p. 263n. For his part, Dyzenhaus simply misreads the whole Schmitt-Strauss dialogue. He has Strauss attacking Schmitt: "Strauss argues that because Schmitt did not bring his positive valuation of the political to the surface, he also failed to follow through properly on his critique of liberalism. In order to follow through, suggested Strauss, one had to win a 'horizon beyond liberalism,' something Schmitt had not achieved." See Dyzenhaus, *Legality and Legitimacy*, *op. cit.*, p. 85n. But that was Schmitt's point, i.e., that as yet there was no "horizon beyond liberalism," which is why his critique of liberalism was "provisional."

81. Dyzenhaus, *Legality and Legitimacy*, *op. cit.*, p. xi.

82. Caldwell, *op. cit.*, pp. 11-12.

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Papen, but with Kurt von Schleicher.[83]

The comedy of errors and falsifications goes on, in order to legitimate the new managerial democracy confused with the long-gone liberalism that Schmitt criticized. By keeping the focus on the ghosts of Nazism and fascism, the anti-Schmittians manage to avoid confronting the problems that the new system creates, such as the continuing manipulation of public opinion, the rule of an unaccountable and inefficient bureaucratic apparatus, the increasing marginalization of local self-determination, and the hypocrisy of an American system advocating universality and neutrality, while instrumentalizing both in the pursuit of its own self-interest. Charging the windmills of fascism and Nazism, which no one in his right mind today would defend, and mystifying Schmitt's ideas, which very few seem to understand, may help the anti-Schmittians reinforce a sense of moral superiority and contribute to advancing the careers of otherwise mediocre scribes. But it does not help understand or resolve the contradictions of an age of collective decadence and luxurious nihilism.

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83. Later Caldwell states that "Schmitt conspired with Kurt von Schleicher and other generals to set up an authoritarian state excluding the Nazis" (p. 87). He never resolves this contradiction. Neither does Dyzenhaus. See Gary Ulmen, "Between the Weimar Republic and the Third Reich: Continuity in Carl Schmitt's Thought," in *Telos* 119 (Spring 2001), pp. 18-31.

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The Definite and the Dubious: Carl Schmitt's Influence on Conservative Political and Legal Theory in the US[1]

Joseph W. Bendersky

If some of the recent scholarship on Carl Schmitt is correct, there are insidious forces at work in America of which everyone in the country is completely unaware. Most people are also oblivious to the fact that behind these secret forces threatening America stands the dangerous "ghost of Carl Schmitt." While it is at least partially facetious to introduce the subject in this manner, those sounding the alarm about this alleged danger are absolutely serious. One refers to the "profound blindness" among contemporary American legal theorists that "risks rendering American legal thought provincial and irrelevant."[2] Moreover, those making such extraordinary claims are neither political fringe elements nor conspiracy quacks. They hold positions in political science departments at prestigious universities, and the books containing their alarmist claims have been published by prominent academic presses.

These scholars argue that, after WWII, Schmitt exerted a significant, "subterranean influence" on political and legal thinking in the US. He thereby "helped determine the contours of political thinking in the US," and continues to do so to this very day.[3] "In what surely belongs among the great intellectual paradoxes of our times," writes one, "many American

1. A version of this paper was delivered at the Seminar on the History of Legal and Political Thought at Columbia University, New York (November 7, 2001).
2. William E. Scheuerman, *Carl Schmitt: The End of Law* (New York: Rowan & Littlefield, 1999), pp. 261-262.
3. *Ibid.*, pp. 11, 12 and 184.

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political scientists, in the immediate aftermath of the victory over National Socialism in 1945, embraced a tradition of political thought that was complicit in the antidemocratic sins of twentieth-century European political theory and practice."[4] Indeed, these scholars actually argue that Schmitt is the "bridge between past and present, between interwar German fascism and post-World War II North American conservatism."[5]

Demonstrating that Schmitt was the intellectual "godfather" of post-WWII American conservatism was no easy task. After all, until the 1980s few in North America had even heard of Schmitt — and most of them worked under the then prevalent, though erroneous notion, that he was a Nazi thinker. For this reason, in the postwar decades, few scholars in Europe or America wanted, in any way, to be associated with the man or his ideas. Schmitt was *persona non grata* in all intellectual circles.

How then did this tainted outcast, during these very years, exercise such "profound" influence over the very country that had just interrogated him at Nuremberg as a potential war criminal? Schmitt did so without saying or doing anything, for his ideas had supposedly already infected the thinking of certain German émigrés, who were about to play influential roles in American intellectual life in the postwar decades. These thinkers were Friedrich Hayek, Hans Morgenthau, Joseph Schumpeter, and Leo Strauss. None of them ever saw themselves as promoters of Schmittian ideas. In fact, several of them had been hostile critics of Schmitt. Not one of them ever dared to attribute any of their own ideas to Schmitt. Yet, this current school of Schmitt historiography insists that, through their works, there are "clear lines of succession back to Schmitt in all the major components of contemporary American conservatism."[6] Schmittian influence can be seen in "democratic elite theory," the free-market critique of the welfare state, cultural conservatism, and the "realist" theory of international relations.[7] It has even been claimed that this stream of influence extends indirectly, though no less significantly, to Allan Bloom, William Kristol, Newt Gingrich, and Pat Buchanan.[8]

Furthermore, the consequences of such influence are depicted, to say the least, as far reaching. Thus, William E. Scheuerman argues that one must understand this Schmittian influence in order to avoid repeating the

4. *Ibid.*, p. 207.
5. John P. McCormick, *Carl Schmitt's Critique of Liberalism: Against Politics as Technology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 302.
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 303-304.
7. Scheuerman, *Carl Schmitt*, *op. cit.*, pp. 11-12, 180-255.
8. McCormick, *Carl Schmitt's Critique of Liberalism*, *op. cit.*, pp. 302-303.

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political catastrophes and barbarism of the past century: "The twentieth century has been one of exceptional political brutality. It would be naïve and presumptuous to believe that we could ever adequately compensate its millions of victims. Maybe, however, we can use the example of the crown jurist of National Socialism, Carl Schmitt, to help make sure that the next century avoids the worst horrors of the last."[9] John P. McCormick worries about current indications of similar Schmittian paths in America, Europe and the Third World. He actually identifies these alarming "indicators" rather precisely as: "neo-Nazism, militia movements, 'Christian identity' ideologies, ethnic cleansing, racially motivated mass rape, violent attacks on emigrant workers and foreigners, [and] bombing of abortion clinics and state administrative buildings . . . ."[10]

Now, one can show "certain" Schmittian influences on particular thinkers in North America. However, these extraordinary claims of Schmitt as the intellectual "godfather" of American conservatism, or of any link between German fascism and contemporary American conservatives, is highly dubious, and labeling such connections as highly dubious is, indeed, a very kind of way of putting it. Not only are such connections very questionable, but they are also based on erroneous depictions of Schmitt and his ideas. In actuality, Schmitt never wrote or advocated most of the things these new interpretations attribute to him. There is much to condemn in Schmitt. One can even totally reject him and his ideas. But scholarly standards dictate that he be condemned and rejected for his actual ideas and activities. These critics accuse Schmitt of being an "irrational thinker" with a "lust for power," who advocated dictatorship, a "jurisprudence of lawlessness," and "ethnic cleansing."[11] Yet, nowhere in the historical evidence will one find Schmitt promoting such things.

All this sensationalist language, often in highly indignant moralistic tones, is aimed at the "re-Nazification" of Schmitt. This is an attempt to counteract the substantial new evidence, and the scholarship based on it, that has emerged over the last thirty years. Scholars in Europe, Japan, and America have long refuted the 1950s interpretations of Schmitt as someone who undermined the Weimar Republic and saw his ideas come to fruition in the Third Reich. Nonetheless, those who refuse to accept such reinterpretations based on this evidence, are relentless in insisting that Schmitt was "committed by

9. Scheuerman, *Carl Schmitt*, *op. cit.*, p. 255.
10. McCormick, *Carl Schmitt's Critique of Liberalism*, *op. cit.*, p. 305.
11. David Dyzenhaus, ed., *Law as Politics: Carl Schmitt's Critique of Liberalism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1998), *op. cit.*, pp. 11-13; Scheuerman, *Carl Schmitt*, *op. cit.*, pp. 13, 35, 251.

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his own work to welcoming Hitler's seizure of power."[12] In addition, they accuse those who do not agree with them of being "apologists," who have "de-nazified" and sanitized Schmitt in order to promote his ideas.[13]

Those determined to "re-nazify" Schmitt repeatedly describe him as a fascist. They occasionally even attempt to demonstrate "why a particularly brilliant Weimar conservative in fact became a Weimar fascist."[14] However, such assertions aside, fascism was a revolutionary movement, seeking the revolutionary transformation of society, whereas Schmitt, even during his worst compromises in the Third Reich, remained a "statist." As a good Hobbesian, Schmitt's goal was always order and stability, as well as the preservation of traditional institutions of state and society. Those who characterize Schmitt as a fascist no doubt firmly believe him to be one. But, for them, Schmitt must be depicted as a "fascist" for another reason. Without fascist roots, American conservatism, and the ominous future it supposedly portends, becomes far less menacing. "Is there cause for alarm in the fact that Schmitt's work has been revived simultaneously with a reemergence of the kind of right-wing political activity that Schmitt himself endorsed?"[15] One is continually alerted not to be deceived about this hidden threat,[16] for Schmitt's "authoritarian strategy should attune the contemporary reader to the fact that regressive movements that would

12. Dyzenhaus, "Why Carl Schmitt?" in Dyzenhaus, *Law as Politics*, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

13. Dieter Haselbach, "Die Wandlung zum Liberalen: Zur gegenwärtigen Schmitt-Diskussion in den USA," in Klaus Hansen and Hans Lietzmann, eds., *Carl Schmitt und die Liberalismuskritik* (Opladen: Leske & Budrich, 1988), pp. 119-140; David Dyzenhaus, *Legality and Legitimacy: Carl Schmitt, Hans Kelsen, and Hermann Heller in Weimar* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp. 98-101; Scheuerman, *Carl Schmitt*, *op. cit.*, p. 257.

14. John P. McCormick, "The Dilemmas of Dictatorship: Carl Schmitt and Constitutional Emergency Powers," in Dyzenhaus, *Law as Politics*, *op. cit.*, p. 236; McCormick, *Carl Schmitt's Critique of Liberalism*, *op. cit.*, p. 12; Scheuerman, *Carl Schmitt*, *op. cit.*, p. 260.

15. McCormick, *Carl Schmitt's Critique of Liberalism*, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

16. To ensure as to where this line of thought should proceed, it is claimed that: "On the manner by which, for instance, contemporary American policy advocates of the right deploy the supposedly 'traditional conservatism' of Schmitt-student Leo Strauss, see Brent Staples, 'Undemocratic Vistas: The Sinister Vogue of Leo Strauss,' in the *New York Times* of November 28, 1994." See John P. McCormick, "Feudalism, Fascism, and Fordism: Weimar Theories of Representation and Their Legacy in the Bonn Republic," in Peter C. Caldwell and William E. Scheuerman, eds., *From Liberal Democracy to Fascism* (Boston: Prometheus Books, 2000), p. 73. However, the Schmitt as fascist theme notwithstanding, this volume contains two illuminating contributions on the history of German political and constitutional thought. See Manfred H. Wiegandt, "Antiliberal Foundations, Democratic Convictions: The Methodological and Political Position of Gerhard Leibholz in the Weimar Republic," pp. 106-135, and Peter C. Caldwell, "Is a 'Social Rechtsstaat' Possible? The Weimar Roots of a Bonn Controversy," pp. 136-153."

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only bring about new and worse forms of oppression will cloak themselves in the less offensive garb of 'traditional conservatism'."

Efforts at linking Schmitt with American conservatism also represent a new trend in the historiography of this field. Unlike other studies of Schmitt, these works concentrate not on the history of political and legal theory in Germany, but rather focus on the US. This "North American Excursion"[17] is relatively new, and illustrates two other aspects of recent Schmitt studies. On the one hand, it shows how quickly such new interpretations of Schmitt come and go; on the other, it shows how malleable Schmitt has become as a subject. It was not long ago that the *New York Review of Books*, among others, praised those interpretations that found the key to Schmitt's thought and political affiliations in his alleged "political-theology."[18] But, within just a few short years, this so-called "theological twist" in Schmitt historiography has already given way to the "North American Excursion."

For the origins of the "North American Excursion," one has to look back to German leftist scholarship on Schmitt during the 1970s and 1980s. These leftist scholars tried to establish a continuity from Schmitt's Weimar theories, through the Third Reich, and into the Federal Republic. In this leftist framework, Schmitt appears as a thinker determined to secure the hegemony of bourgeois social and economic interests that were threatened by the emergence of Weimar democracy. In order to defend this bourgeois political domination, Schmitt supposedly relied on the emergency powers of the president. When that failed with the Nazi seizure of power in 1933, Schmitt then pursued the same goal of bourgeois hegemony by opportunistically working with the Nazis. After WWII, the very idea of a strong presidency was out of the question, so Schmitt again devised a new instrument for securing bourgeois hegemony against the democratic forces of a parliamentary system, and that new instrument was the Federal Constitutional Court. Whereas most political observers have considered the Federal Constitutional Court to be a major stabilizing force against threats to the survival of the postwar democratic system in Germany, the Left sees this

17. See my review of Dyzenhaus, *Law as Politics* and Scheuerman, *Carl Schmitt* in *Central European History*, Vol. 34, No. 1 (2001), pp. 116-120.

18. Mark Lilla, "The Enemy of Liberalism," in *New York Review of Books*, XLIV, No. 8 (May 15, 1997), pp. 38-44. See also Andreas Koenen, *Der Fall Carl Schmitt: Sein Aufstieg zum "Kronjuristen des Dritten Reiches"* (Darmstadt: Wissensch. BG Dst., 1995) and Heinrich Meier, *Carl Schmitt and Leo Strauss: The "Hidden Dialogue: Including Strauss's Notes on Schmitt's* Concept of the Political *and Three Letters from Strauss to Schmitt*, tr. by J. Harvey Lomax (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995).

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institution quite differently. From this leftist perspective, Schmitt designed the court specifically to limit the democratic exercise of power through parliament and thereby accomplish his longtime goal of preserving bourgeois domination against the democratic rights of the people.[19]

Some of these German leftists linked the growing interest in Schmitt in the US with the same goal of bourgeois domination. They explicitly identified George Schwab and myself as American neo-conservatives engaged in transplanting Schmitt to the US to "protect domination against pluralism." Supposedly, we had denazified Schmitt in order to use his ideas to promote the "Reagan Revolution," and to protect the capitalist order against popular democratic forces.[20] But drawing such connections, without sufficient grounds or evidence, typifies the overall approach to scholarship of this German leftist school of thought.

There is specific evidence that this German leftist school of thought definitely influenced the scholars responsible for the current "North American Excursion." This is especially true regarding one of the best-known German leftist interpreters of Schmitt — Ingeborg Maus.[21] As one of these scholars phrased it, "my remarks here have been inspired by Maus, in more ways than I can begin to acknowledge."[22] Whereas most scholars see a "break" in Schmitt's thinking and political activity in 1933 when he began to compromise with the Nazis, Maus maintains the leftist interpretation of "continuity." In fact, she argues there was also no "break in 1945." To Maus, Schmitt's legal theory established "indeterminate" concepts of law and constitutions, i.e., the interpretation and implementation of laws and constitutional articles always remained rather fluid and flexible, depending on the political and social realities of the times. Thus,

19. Hans Lietzmann, "Vater der Verfassungsväter? Carl Schmitt und die Verfassungsgründung in der Bundesrepublik," in Hansen and Lietzmann, *Carl Schmitt und die Liberalismuskritik*, *op. cit.*, pp. 107-118.

20. Haselbach, "Die Wandlung zum Liberalen," *op. cit.*, pp. 126-129. Since I am a Social Democrat who campaigned for McGovern and Carter, such charges appeared rather funny to my family, colleagues, and students. Neither have I ever been a Schmittian. And to this day, I have not the slightest idea where they ever got the notion that I was affiliated with neo-conservatives. Almost fifteen years ago, I exposed these inaccurate and ludicrous associations with causes and ideas I definitely opposed then and now. See Joseph W. Bendersky, "Carl Schmitt as *Occasio*," in *Telos* 78 (Winter 1988-89), pp. 202-208.

21. Maus introduced her fundamental arguments on Schmitt and bourgeois domination decades ago in *Bürgerliche Rechtstheorie und Faschismus: Zur sozialen Funktion und aktuellen Wirkung der Theorie Carl Schmitts* (Munich: Wilhelm, 1976).

22. William E. Scheuerman, "Revolutions and Constitutions: Hannah Arendt's Challenge to Carl Schmitt," in Dyzenhaus, *Law as Politics*, *op. cit.*, pp. 274-275. See also McCormick, *Carl Schmitt's Critique of Liberalism*, *op. cit.*, pp. 143-144, 229, 235, 253.

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there is a kind of "legal indeterminacy." Such indeterminate law is in stark contrast to positivist law, which demands strict adherence to the specific wording and intent of the lawgiver. To Maus, Schmitt's indeterminate legal theory permits those in power "absolute discretion" and "discrimination" in implementing law according to the existing political situation. It follows that those holding political power would use such legal discretion to defend their own class interests. This was the real intent and consequence of Schmitt's legal theory.

Here, too, Schmitt emerges as the defender of bourgeois interests and capitalist structures. After using certain liberal concepts to defend bourgeois interests in early Weimar, Schmitt's theories supposedly justified eliminating parliament when those same interests felt threatened by popular forces in the legislature. Allegedly, Schmitt's legal thought protected these economically privileged classes after 1933 by just as easily adapting to National Socialism. With these same class-based objectives in mind, Schmitt allegedly adapted his legal theory to suit the new democratic system in West Germany after WWII. He was still securing bourgeois privileges against the rest of society. To this very day, Maus still argues that Schmitt's legal concepts are "the secret dominant legal theory of the Federal Republic, particularly of the Constitutional Court."[23] The "North American Excursion" is a parallel to the German leftist interpretation of Schmitt. Accordingly, Schmitt is not only the "secret" force behind official German legal theory today, but his ghost also "continues to haunt . . . political thinking in the United States as well."[24]

The advocates of this kind of interpretation attempt to demonstrate this link between Schmitt and American conservatives by using the method of the "hidden dialogue," i.e., by carefully deconstructing the writings of American conservative thinkers, one can discern that they were engaged in seriously confronting Schmittian ideas. It is supposedly the case of "a dialogue that has *already* taken place between Schmitt and American political thought."[25] One can identify this "hidden dialogue" revealing such influence even where Schmitt is not mentioned, or where his work is criticized or dismissed.

This "hidden dialogue" supposedly took place even over subjects such as "technology" and the "welfare state," where Schmitt had very little, if

23. Ingeborg Maus, "The 1933 'Break' In Carl Schmitt's Theory," in Dyzenhaus, *Law as Politics*, *op. cit.*, pp. 196-216.
24. Scheuerman, *Carl Schmitt*, *op. cit.*, p. 180.
25. *Ibid.*, pp. 11, 183.

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anything, to say at all.[26] Nonetheless, bringing Schmitt into the socio-economic realm of the "welfare state" is especially important for this school of thought, for these writers are absolutely convinced that Schmitt's bourgeois legal thought is intended to serve as a bulwark against the kind of social and economic justice these writers feel compelled to dispense throughout the world.[27] While such social and economic justice is a laudable goal, the case is yet to be made that Schmitt took this antagonistic stance toward the lower classes. The fact of the matter is that no one has ever even superficially examined Schmitt's thoughts on social issues or economic policy. And when this is done, one might be surprised at what is uncovered. After all, the conservative Catholic milieu from which Schmitt emerged, though anti-socialist, had strong sympathies toward progressive social and economic policies.

However, the problems with the methodology of the "hidden dialogue" become most evident when it is used to connect Schmitt with Schumpeter, Hayek, and Morgenthau. Supposedly, these three authors "engaged in a relatively intense dialogue with Schmitt and his ideas."[28] Yet, the books claiming to document this dialogue do nothing of the kind. Moreover, the use of conjecture and questionable inferences, combined with the misuse or lack of evidence, is startling. At first glance, it may appear that there is something to the claims of a link between Schmitt and Schumpeter. Between 1925 and 1928, they were colleagues at the University of Bonn, were familiar with some of each other's works, and occasionally socialized. At certain points, they even noted admiration for each other's scholarship.[29] A great deal, including the "specifics" of this dialogue that never materialized is predicated on this three year professional relation. A dialogue, however, implies some sort of communication or exchange of ideas. But where is the interaction between these thinkers? Where are the works, or sections of works, in which they discuss or challenge each other?

Note how different this relation is from that between Schmitt and others with whom he engaged in direct debate. Schmitt and Hans Kelsen openly challenged each other in their works. The young Leo Strauss wrote an article criticizing Schmitt's "friend-enemy" thesis and they then exchanged ideas on the subject. But nothing similar exists between

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26. *Ibid.*, pp. 91-92. See also McCormack, *Carl Schmitt's Critique of Liberalism*, *op. cit.*
27. Scheuerman, *Carl Schmitt*, *op. cit.*, pp. 4-5, 89-90, 108-112, 212-224. See also McCormick, *Carl Schmitt's Critique of Liberalism*, *op. cit.*, pp. 312-314.
28. Scheuerman, *Carl Schmitt*, *op. cit.*, pp. 11-12.
29. *Ibid.*, pp. 197-199.

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Schumpeter and Schmitt. As for the details (where, as is well-known, the devil resides), the author soon reduces definite "influence" and crucial "dialogue" to mere "thematic parallels" in their thinking. The promised definite connection is reduced to a mere "suspicion" that this must have existed, because one can perhaps identify certain "affinities" in their ideas.[30]

It is claimed that, at the beginning, Schumpeter's classic work *"Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy* can be read as an attempt to respond to Schmitt's own diagnosis of the crisis of parliamentarism."[31] Yet, neither man ever acknowledged any connection on this subject. Then, it is claimed (or, perhaps, it is merely reluctantly conceded) that perhaps Schumpeter never "borrowed" his ideas directly from Schmitt. But their discussions during their Bonn years, "at the very least helped cement Schumpeter's own antidemocratic tendencies."[32] There is no documentation to substantiate this grand supposition. The supposed direct lineage from Schmitt to Schumpeter is then broadened far beyond Schmitt, to the more general authoritarian milieu of the 1920s in which they both supposedly functioned. Even in those cases where one can show some exchange of ideas, it is argued that what one thinker actually stated cannot be taken at face value. Thus, Schmitt did cite Schumpeter's "Sociology of Imperialism." But he did so critically. Nonetheless, this apparent criticism should be read differently. If properly deconstructed, what appears to be criticism, as actually stated by Schmitt, suddenly becomes Schmitt using his own political theory to substantiate Schumpeter's theory of imperialism.[33]

Despite the failure to deliver a promised lineage of influence, and after all the qualifications and backtracking, the supposed "intellectual nexus" between the "fascist" Schmitt and Schumpeter is maintained to the very end: "Schumpeter's theory *is* a rival to Schmitt's. This is a friendly rivalry, however, resting on mutual respect and an extensive set of shared intellectual assumptions. Schumpeter's theory is hardly fascistic. Yet Schumpeter may be only a few steps away from Schmitt's path." Indeed, it is concluded that American political science "will now have to examine the alarming possibility that authoritarian right-wing political theory exercised a subterranean influence, via Schumpeter, on this discipline."[34]

Indeed, it is claimed that Schmitt's "impact on contemporary free-market

30. *Ibid.*, pp. 183, 191, 199-200.
31. *Ibid.*, p. 183.
32. *Ibid.*, p. 200.
33. *Ibid.*, pp. 198-199.
34. *Ibid.*, p. 206.

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conservatism is even more substantial than his influence on democratic theory in postwar political science."[35] This is accomplished through Hayek, who, allegedly, "repeatedly acknowledged his intellectual debts to Schmitt."[36] In 1960, Hayek did cite a few of Schmitt's legal works in *Constitution of Liberty* and in his last work, *Law, Legislation, and Liberty*, Hayek did praise Schmitt as "the extraordinary German student of politics." Moreover, it is correct to identify the actual "parallels" between certain Schmittian ideas and those in Hayek's 1944 *The Road to Serfdom*, despite Hayek's attempts to prevent any such association by harshly criticizing Schmitt and affiliating him with Nazism.[37] But the two men never met or corresponded. Schmitt was unfamiliar with Hayek's work. Although Hayek did cite Schmitt's critique of the "pluralistic party state,"[38] Hayek remained unfamiliar with most of Schmitt's writings in political theory. Nonetheless, it is argued that Hayek "builds on key elements of Schmitt's theoretical assault on the Weimar left."[39]

In essence, both figures supposedly made common cause against the welfare state, and here Schmitt's alleged assault on the welfare state receives a great deal of emphasis. But since Schmitt, in actuality, did not address the welfare state in this manner, it is necessary to transform what he did write into the language of the welfare state. Thus, Schmitt's famous designation of Weimar as a "party-state" was reputedly a criticism of the "democratic welfare state."[40] But this transformation of the party-state into the welfare state does not hold up. On the contrary, Schmitt's party-state referred not only to leftist political parties and labor unions, but rather to a variety of pluralistic forces in Weimar that included Catholics, even bourgeois parties, and the powerful capitalist economic forces he was allegedly defending. The fact is that the repeated references to the "welfare state" do not actually emanate from Schmitt.

This does not prevent reading into Schmitt anti-social-democratic positions that he had not actually taken in Weimar. Although Schmitt did not single out the Social Democrats, or even refer to them in this manner, it is made to appear that they were his primary, perhaps sole, target (or enemy). He is accused of "railing against social-democratic forms of state

35. *Ibid.*, p. 209.
36. *Ibid.*
37. *Ibid.*, pp. 218, 220.
38. *Ibid.*, pp. 219-220.
39. *Ibid.*, p. 209.
40. *Ibid.*, pp. 212-224.

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activity."[41] His concept of the "qualitative total state" is depicted as a means of protecting the "substantial autonomy of owners of private capital" against "a weak, social-democratic inspired interventionist state."[42] Yet, this language is not taken from Schmitt. Neither is the quote used to make it appear that Schmitt was addressing these socio-economic issues in this manner by supposedly advocating that the state divest itself of "welfare obligations, [and] commitments to protecting [the] social rights" of subordinate social constituencies.[43] That quote is derived from a 1994 article about Schmitt attributing this to him.[44] Nevertheless, the erroneous descriptions of Schmitt's defense of the capitalist economy against social democracy are then carried to a further inferential extreme. It is claimed that a lecture Schmitt delivered to an industrial group in late 1932 in support of Schleicher's plans for government social and economic programs to counteract the depression was really "an early attempt to extend the infamous *Führerprinzip* into the economy; and second, it reproduces the view, widespread among propertied groups in Germany in 1933, that the Nazis might succeed in guaranteeing German business far more autonomy than it had succeeded in maintaining in the Weimar period."[45]

As with Schumpeter, so too with Hayek, the connection with Schmitt is usually reduced to assumed affinities and parallels in thought and objectives, or, hidden in Hayek's work, is "his implicit dependence on Schmitt." In the end, both theorists supposedly advocate the use of

41. *Ibid.*, p. 215.
42. *Ibid.*
43. *Ibid.*
44. See Peter Gowan, "The Return of Carl Schmitt," in *Debate: Review of Contemporary German Affairs*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (1994), p. 120.
45. Scheuerman, *Carl Schmitt*, *op. cit.*, pp. 326-327. For how blatant is this reading into Schmitt of positions he never took, compare the passages in Scheuerman with what Schmitt actually said in "Gesunde Wirtschaft im starken Staat," in *Mitteilungen des Vereins zur Wahrnehmung der gemeinsamen wirtschaftlichen Interessen in Rheinland und Westfalen (Langnamverein)*, No. 1, pp. 13-32. This was republished a few months later as "Starker Staat und gesunde Wirtschaft," in *Volk und Recht: Politische Monatshefte* (February 1933), pp. 81-94. Almost Schmitt's entire lecture dealt with the political deadlock at the end of 1932, and his theme was essentially that constitutional reform should not be attempted in the midst of this crisis. In those few instances where he mentioned economic revival, he did so in the tone of Schleicher's plans. Ironically, in stark contrast to Scheuerman's contention of Schmitt defending bourgeois capital and ownership, the Schleicher reforms Schmitt was supporting were staunchly opposed by business, capitalists and the political Right as leftist and "socialistic," and they quickly withdrew their backing of the general turned chancellor. On Schleicher's turn to the Left, see Hajo Holborn, *A History of Modern Germany, 1840-1945* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1982), pp. 704-705.

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"authoritarian political means" to conduct a full-fledged assault on the democratic welfare state. However, even in this crucial conclusion there are the by now usual qualifications. Presumably, Schmitt only "indirectly acknowledged" this goal, and Hayek never "explicitly endorsed" it, even though this is where both their ideas supposedly have definitely led.[46]

This line of thought is pursued further in yet "another hidden dialogue" that supposedly occurred between Schmitt and Hans Morgenthau. Four essential points are made regarding this relation. First, Morgenthau harshly condemned Schmitt and disassociated himself from him. Second, Morgenthau actually influenced Schmitt's thinking on politics in a significant way. Third, Morgenthau did absorb Schmitt's ideas. And fourth, in the final analysis, Morgenthau the man — and his theories — are both inherently better than the fascist Schmitt and his immoral, murderous ideas.[47]

Since both Morgenthau and Schmitt are Hobbesian proponents of the realist school of international relations, it is legitimate to compare and contrast the origins and nature of their ideas. There may have been some intellectual cross-fertilization on certain points. But to propose such dramatic influence of Schmitt on Morgenthau, leading to the dire consequences attributed to American conservatism, is highly questionable. Among the numerous writings of Schmitt relating to political theory and international relations, the so-called Morgenthau-Schmitt dialogue is actually limited to one work — Schmitt's *The Concept of the Political.*

Morgenthau claimed that his 1929 dissertation was written, in part, as a response to Schmitt's 1927 book, and that Schmitt revised the 1932 edition of *The Concept of the Political* to accommodate this. Although Schmitt never acknowledged this influence, these scholars argue that "fundamental shifts" in Schmitt's political thinking occurred because of Morgenthau's influence. The contention is that thereafter Schmitt introduced a "model of intensity" to explain friend-enemy relations that was lacking in his original version.[48] However, a careful analysis of the changes from the 1927 to the 1932 edition show no "fundamental shift."[49] In fact, Schmitt did use the concept of "intensity" in the original version. What appears in the 1932 edition is an elaboration of that original idea. It

46. *Ibid.*, pp. 223-224.
47. *Ibid.*, pp. 225-251.
48. *Ibid.*, pp. 225-226, 231-237.
49. Compare Carl Schmitt, "Der Begriff des Politischen," in *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik*, Vol. 58, No. 1 (August 1927), especially pp. 4-5, 9-11, with *The Concept of the Political*, tr. by George Schwab (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1976), pp. 26-27, 36-43.

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certainly represents nothing even approximating a refocusing, fundamental shift in thought, or the introduction of a new "model of intensity."

The nature and effects of the "hidden dialogue" take on even more dubious dimensions on this issue. Although Schmitt never responded publicly to Morgenthau's ideas, it is claimed that "it is possible to discern the outlines of his likely response." The author then goes on to explain in detail how Schmitt "probably would have answered Morgenthau."[50] Again, one really does wonder about the existence of this so-called "dialogue," especially since it is purported to be: ". . . ultimately more decisive for the constitution of Schmitt's 'concept of the political' than Schmitt's dialogue with Strauss."[51]

The only other concrete intellectual interaction between the two men was completely one-sided. In 1933, Morgenthau published a harsh critique of Schmitt's *Concept of the Political*, to which Schmitt never responded. This is explained as Morgenthau disassociating himself from Schmitt, when the latter started to collaborate with the Nazis. Nonetheless, by the 1940s, Morgenthau has allegedly again moved back closer to Schmitt's ideas on international relations.[52] Since Morgenthau did not cite Schmitt, the proof for this new Schmittian-oriented Morgenthau is to be found, once again, in the "parallels" in their thinking. This is especially true regarding realism in international politics and the place of morality. The argument gets complicated further by the desire to ensure that Morgenthau, the victim of Nazism, is not really equated with the fascist Schmitt after all. In the final analysis, despite all the influences each exerted on the other, Schmitt represented the "realism of war," whereas Morgenthau represented the "realism of peace." Although neither of the contentions has been, or can be, substantiated, these essential differences can be "traced to their earlier dialogue on the 'concept of the political'."[53]

The Morgenthau-Schmitt relation also raises questions about another problem with the "North American Excursion." In trying so hard to establish the direct, crucial link between Schmitt and American conservatism, they neglect the countless other significant influences on Schumpeter, Hayek, and Morgenthau, as well as the equally abundant other forces and influences beyond these thinkers that helped shape American conservatism.

This deficiency is quite evident regarding Morgenthau's realism in

50. Scheuerman, *Carl Schmitt*, *op. cit.*, p. 236.
51. *Ibid.*, p. 227.
52. *Ibid.*, pp. 237-243.
53. *Ibid.*, pp. 245-251.

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international relations. Although Morgenthau name and theories became a symbol for this school of thought, he did not invent it anymore than its origins can be traced back solely to Schmitt. There is a very long tradition of this kind of realism in German political thought (especially regarding morality and international politics) that affected both Morgenthau and Schmitt. Off-hand, one could cite the writings of Frederick the Great, which relegated morality — out of necessity — to a subordinate role to *raison d'état*. By the late 19th century, Heinrich von Treitschke likewise elevated power over morality in the state's pursuit of survival and self-realization. In fact, the same is true in the field of German positivist legal theory that dominated in Germany in the late 19th century. Positivist law advocates recognized no higher force or authority than the sovereign state, whose preservation and interests were paramount. Natural law or other universal norms of morality were not to interfere with *raison d'état*.

Up to WWI, German historians provided numerous studies on "Great Power" politics, all based on the advancement of the interest of sovereign state in its competition with others (Hans Delbrück, Erich Marcks, Otto Hintze). Certainly, one would have to take into account the entire field of geopolitical theory, from its inception in the late 19th century through the 1930s, including the enormous influence of Karl Haushofer. If one were to comprehensively investigate this subject, one would have to take into account Sigmund Freud's works on war, the state, and group behavior on the international scene. Although both Schmitt and Freud were Hobbesians, they did not influence each other at all. Yet, "the" parallels between their thinking on friend-enemy antagonisms and the role of state power and national interest in international relations are, indeed, striking.[54] Can one legitimately speak of a "hidden dialogue" that impacted American conservatism? Not really. In noting this vast array of German influences, numerous American and British intellectual currents that must be taken into account have not been mentioned.

One curious aspects of the "North America Excursion" is the complete neglect of a key figure in American political science who was directly influenced by Schmitt: Carl J. Friedrich. Schmitt and Friedrich did have a long personal relation, and Friedrich specifically integrated Schmittian concepts into his own work from the 1930s through the post-WWII era. Whether on

54. For the Schmitt-Freud parallels, see Joseph W. Bendersky, "Schmitt and Freud: Anthropology, Enemies, and the State," in Dietrich Murswiek, Ulrich Storost, Heinrich A. Wolff, eds., *Staat – Souveränität – Verfassung: Festschrift für Helmut Quaritsch zum 70. Geburtstag* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 2000), pp. 622-635.

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theories of totalitarianism, executive emergency powers, international relations, or the constitution of the Federal Republic, Schmitt's influence on Friedrich is undeniable. The evidence for this relation is available and there is no need to resort to "hidden dialogues" to establish it.

That Schmittian ideas might also, in various ways, have influenced certain aspects of the thinking of Schumpeter, Hayek, and Morgenthau is certainly correct. But reading their key theories as variants of Schmitt's is an untenable proposition. So, too, is attempting to make these figures the carriers of Schmitt's dangerous ghost hovering over American conservative thinking. Such a direct line does not exist. It can only be forced into existence by manipulating ideas and "parallels," as well as by neglecting all other possible influences and sources.

In recent decades, scholars have been able to establish through concrete evidence that various intellectuals across the political spectrum had been influenced by Schmitt. This includes leftist émigrés such as Otto Kirchheimer and Franz Neumann. But no attempt has been made to depict them as bearers of the Schmittian ghost exercising insidious influences on America, with similar dangerous implications to those attributed to American conservatism. The reliance on certain Schmittian works or concepts indicates instead that in the Weimar era Schmitt was considered an important conservative thinker, whose thoughts illuminated key areas of political and legal thought. He was recognized as such a mainstream thinker by intellectuals across the political spectrum, who used his works accordingly. Neither his ideas nor his personal political proclivities were perceived as fascist. The intellectual relations that might be established between Schmitt and thinkers such as Schumpeter, Hayek, and Morgenthau should be viewed in a similar light.

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Carl Schmitt and Federalism[1]

Luis María Bandieri

The relation between Carl Schmitt and federalism immediately poses a problem. Except for a section on federalism in *Verfassungslehre*,[2] and his remarks in *Der Hüter der Verfassung*,[3] references to federalism in Schmitt's works are few and far between. Since he obviously considered federalism an important constitutional problem, it is puzzling that he did not say more about it. When he discusses the state, i.e., "political unity" *par excellence*, he does not inquire about its internal organization — in particular, how power is articulated internally. Since the state is the ultimate representative of the *jus publicum Europaeum*, Schmitt emphasizes its ability to guarantee internal peace without dealing with the mechanisms needed for the task. But is federalism a version of the classical state, and did Schmitt conceive of other political forms that would transcend it?

In current constitutional literature, federalism refers to a particular form of the territorial articulation of power. According to Schmitt, control of a territory by the state may occur in two ways: either with a territorial articulation of power among the parts dependent on the whole — the center — which monopolizes control; or with one where everything, including the center, depend on the parts, and central control is distributed between the whole and the parts. The first is a *unitary*, while the second is a *federal* model. Thus,

1. Translated from Spanish by Victoria Talavera.
2. Carl Schmitt, *Verfassungslehre* (1928), 5th ed. (Berlin: Dumcker & Humblot, 1970); all quotations are from "The Constitutional Theory of Federation," tr. by G. L. Ulmen, in *Telos* 91 (Spring 1992), pp. 26-56.
3. Carl Schmitt, *Der Hüter der Verfassung* (1931), 2nd ed. (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1969).

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Argentina is a federal state formed by provincial member states. The *confederation* results in a territorial articulation of power where a number of states agree to delegate certain jurisdictions to a common suprastate organization.

Schmitt was educated in a legal and political environment infused with "federal" and "confederal" ideas, as they were shaped in Lothringen and the Holy Roman Empire, where villages, cities, and communes, each with their own means and objectives, developed without being threatened by their relation to wider groups, kingdoms or empires. This is how the idea of unity[4] as "harmonious agreement" arose in medieval thought. When Napoleon overthrew the ancient German empire, he understood that the various German principalities could not survive in isolation — and in order to organize *Mittleuropa* he created under his protectorate the Conferedation of the Rhine (1806-1813), excluding Prussia. With the fall of Napoleon, the Germanic Confederation was established, integrating 38 sovereign states including an empire (Austria) and five kingdoms (Prussia, Bavaria, Wurtemberg, Saxony, and Hannover). The second German Reich was organized in 1871 as a federal state formed by 25 member states under Prussian hegemony. The federal council was presided over by the King of Prussia, who held the title of Emperor of Germany, and designated the Reich's Chancellor. In 1919, the Weimar Republic was federal, parliamentary, and democratic, although the individual states retained limited prerogatives. Whatever the limitations of these confederations and federations, at the beginning of the 20th century German jurists could not avoid confronting federalism.[5]

Schmitt's *Verfassungslehre* is his only work dealing with conventional and classical juridical theory. In it, he challenged many of his colleagues, and took positions contrary to established opinion. Schmitt who, when all is said and done, was more of a jurist — more a *Kronjurist* — of the Weimar Republic than of the Third Reich, where he ended up as an outsider, composed this study a critique of the liberal state, which the Weimar constitution claimed to reflect most adequately. Paradoxically, he

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4. See Otto von Gierke, *Political Theories of the Middle Ages*, tr. by Frederic W. Maitland (Bristol: Thoemmes Press, 1996).

5. As its name indicates, the Federal Republic of Germany was configured in 1949 with a federal system, whereas the Democratic Republic of Germany was founded as a unitary system: a "Socialist state of the German nation." Under the Third Reich, the Enabling Act of March 24, 1933, which abolished the Weimar Constitution, granted legislative power to the Reich Government, i.e., to the *Führer*, who appointed the governor in each and every district. The organization of the Reich was assimilated into the uniform and centralized organization of the Nazi Party. Today, Germany is a federal state.

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became one of the sharpest specialist of those aspects of the liberal state (*Rechtstaat*) generally overlooked by mainstream analysts.[6]

Except for Max von Seydel, whom Schmitt followed, the hitherto dominant political theory counterposed the concept of *Statenbund* — as in the 1815 confederation — to that of federal state (*Bundesstaat*) — as in the Second Reich of 1871. According to Schmitt, there were no differences between them: "a *federation* is a permanent union based on a voluntary agreement concerning the political self-preservation of all member states. It changes the political status of every member of the federation in view of the common purpose."[7] The federation establishes a new juridical and political status for each member. The federal pact is one among states which tends to become permanent (every confederation is conceived of as "eternal," i.e., in terms of the seemingly relative permanence of every political form). According to Schmitt, every federation rests on three antinomies or contradictions: 1) the right to self-preservation as opposed to the *jus belli*; 2) the right to self-determination in opposition to interventions; and 3) the simultaneous existence, on the one hand, of a common federation, and, on the other, of the member states.

The dual character of its political existence is the essence of the federation. This coexistence of a general and a particular political unity generates a difficult equilibrium. Above all, it generates the problem of sovereignty: which is sovereign, the federated states or the federation as a whole? For Schmitt, the question of sovereignty was the question of decision ("Sovereign is he who decides on the state of exemption," in this case, who decides on the question of political existence). If the decision were deferred to a juridical tribunal, it would immediately become sovereign — an existential political power. According to Schmitt, the question could not be decided by deploying the theory current at the time and prevalent among German constitutionalists, based on the distinction between confederation and federation, since in a crisis of political existence the confederation dissolves and the federation turns into a unitary state.

In this context, Schmitt, appeals to John Calhoun's ideas, which proved useful to the Southern confederates.[8] Calhoun challenged the notion that, when the 1787 Constitution took effect, the federal states renounced their

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6. Schmitt, *Der Hüter der Verfassung*, *op cit.*, p. 14.
7. Schmitt, "The Constitutional Theory of Federation," *op. cit.*, p. 30.
8. Schmitt frequently favored the cause of the vanquished: *victrix causa diis placuit, sed victa Catoni* — the victor's cause pleases the gods, but that of the vanquished pleases Cato and Schmitt.

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sovereignty — state's rights — which predated the federation and were in principle unlimited, except for those jurisdictions expressly delegated to the federation, as listed in the Constitution. Calhoun maintained that this delegation of powers did not transfer sovereignty to the federation and did not imply a renunciation of sovereignty. The federal states retained the *right of nullification* for laws and federal acts, and, when their security and existence were compromised, they had a *right to secede* (which led to the Civil War of 1861-65). Thereafter, having been defeated on the battlefield, this position concerning nullification and secession became equivalent to rebellion. The Supreme Court was now the judge in the last instance concerning questions pertaining to the federated states. Yet, according to Schmitt, Calhoun's argument was not thereby refuted. What had happened was that the character of the Constitution had changed and the federation had ceased to exist, i.e., it had been replaced by the administrative and legislative autonomy of the federal states: a pseudo-federation.

Schmitt later discussed the antinomies which tend to weaken a federation. Federation presupposes the *homogeneity of all its members*. For Montesquieu, this homogeneity consisted in the fact that the federated states were republican, i.e., they had the same political organization. This homogeneity could also be based on nationality, religion, civilization, etc. Schmitt seems to privilege national homogeneity, i.e., the homogeneity of the people's origin. Therefore, the first antinomy — the right to self-defense and the renunciation of the *jus belli* — is weakened, because the homogeneity with the other federal states excludes hostility among them. The second antinomy — autonomy and intervention — is also weakened, because the will to self-determination is posited *vis-à-vis* external interference, which cannot obtain among federal states. So is the third antinomy — existential dualism between the sovereign federation and sovereign member states — because homogeneity rules out decisive existential conflicts. In the case of decisions affecting political existence,[9] e.g., concerning either foreign policy or internal security, they will have to be made either

9. James Madison proposed a distributive sovereignty, whereby the member states retain a portion, an inviolable residue of power, and the federation only exercises delegated powers. This is possible, because the people organized as a citizenry, rather than as a mass, express their sovereign will partially, i.e., in several representations: as individuals, as members of a member state, and as members of the federation. See *The Federalist*, ed. with an introduction and notes by Jacob E. Cooke (Middletown, CT.: Wesleyan University Press, 1961). For Schmitt, this division of sovereignty, this type of *finium regundorum* between the federation and the member states, is inconceivable. In the exceptional situation, whoever decides — the federation or the member states — becomes fully sovereign.

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by the federation or the member state. Within such homogeneity, a decisive conflict between the federation and the member states is impossible. Otherwise, the federal pact becomes a "a futile and deceptive enterprise."[10]

The Spanish translator of Schmitt's *Verfassungslehre*, Francisco Ayala, claims that Schmitt "manages to guarantee that federations as well as member states appear at once to be united and sovereign."[11] Yet, for Schmitt, tension between the federation and the member states is inherent in every federal organization. Once an exceptional situation arises, it has to be resolved by the sovereign decision of either the federation or the member states. The antinomies at the core of this tension may become weakened, while the homogeneity which led to the original pact, and changed the status of the member states, remains. Because that homogeneity is acknowledged by these member states, the moment one of them feels a threat to its existence, either the original pact is displaced by a state, "one and indivisible," or it will be destroyed by the exercise of the rights of nullification and secession. In the first instance, when confronted with an exceptional situation, the federation will inevitably exercise its sovereignty and actually evolve into a centralized state; in the second instance, the sovereign act comes from one or more member states, and it destroys the federation. In this case, the state of exception gives rise to the sovereign act, and the one which decides — be it the federation or the member states — creates another juridical order.[12] In any case, the circumstances indicated by Schmitt do not constitute a special weakness of the federation with respect to other forms of territorial articulation of power. One needs only to look at the Spanish or Italian decentralized type of unitary state (the "regional state" or the "autonomous state"), or the United Kingdom to notice the same existential tension between the central state and the particular communities Schmitt identified as the antinomic core or center of the federation's conflict. Even in France, a republic which is one and indivisible *par excellence*, there is the unmanageable case of Corsica. At one time, half-jokingly and half-seriously, ex-Prime Minister Raymond Barre proposed to return it to Genoa.

Schmitt first presents his readers with major difficulties and tensions

10. Schmitt, "The Constitutional Theory of Federation," *op. cit.* p. 40.

11. Cf. Carl Schmitt, *Teoria de la Constitucion*, tr. with an introduction by Francisco Ayala (Madrid: Alianza editorial, 1982).

12. On the difficulties of translating *Ausnahmezustand*," see the translator's note of Jean-Louis Schlegel in *Theologie Politique, 1922,1969* (Paris: Gallimard, 1988), p. 15. On the concept of sovereignty in Schmitt, see my prologue to *Teologia Politica* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Struhart y Cia, 1998) 2nd ed.

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that, in his judgment, appear in every federation. Later, he seems to dismiss them with reference to homogeneity, especially the homogeneity of origin — the national homogeneity of a people. But then he poses a new difficulty in which homogeneity threatens to destroy the federation, i.e., a surviving antinomy between democracy to federalism. The more democracy, the less the proper sphere of the federated states. Both democracy and federalism rest on the presupposition of homogeneity. Schmitt separates democracy and the bourgeois liberal state: the former is a political form that corresponds to the identity principle between the rulers and the ruled, those who command and those who obey. For this reason, the development of democracy within the federation — the national homogenous unity of the people — transcends the political borders of the member states and tends to suppress the balance between the federation and the politically independent member states, in favor of unity.

According to Schmitt, this is conducive to "*a federal state without a federal foundation*,"[13] such as the Weimar Republic or the US. In both, the Constitution takes elements from a previous federal organization and claims to retain them, but the democratic dimension of the constitutive power of the people marginalizes the federation. A complex system of power distinctions and decentralizations comes about, yet the federal base is missing: there is political unity (the political unity of a people in a state), but not the plurality of political unities required by a properly understood federation. As Schmitt points out, there is no mention of Bavarians, Prussians or Swabians in the Weimar Constitution: only Germans. Yet, the contradiction between democracy and federalism, whereby the former undermines the latter, does not seem to have affected Switzerland.

In *Der Hüter der Verfassung*, Schmitt designates the president as the guardian of the constitution, i.e., as a neutral power above the fray. Neither a juridical tribunal nor a constitutional court could fulfill that role, because the sovereign decision would thereby transform them respectively into a supreme court or a constitutional council — into sovereign "negative legislators" (Kelsen's expression). Schmitt discusses in detail the real dangers connected with defending the constitution. On the one hand, there were totalitarian parties with completely hostile worldviews or ideologies (National Socialism and communism), attempting to rob the state of its proper political prerogative, i.e., the drawing of the line between friends and enemies. Besides these totalitarian parties, there were also parliamentary

13. Schmitt, "The Constitutional Theory of Federation," *op. cit.*, p. 55.

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coalitions tending to fragment political unity, which accentuates pluralistic tendencies. Schmitt adds that the "policratism" of the public sectors of the economy (the postal service, the railroads, the Reichsbank, etc.) that function independently of each other were also contributing to the dissolution of the Weimar Republic. On the other hand, given the nature of the Weimar Republic, both a parliamentary and a federal entity, the antinomy between federalism and democracy resurfaced. Schmitt does not hide the fact that the federal side of the Weimar Republic seemed to be destabilizing the state as well as the role of the president as the guardian of the constitution. He claimed that federal arrangements could also support pluralism, but that such a "reconciliation" of parliamentarism and federalism could only be achieved "through a reciprocal loosening of the uniformity and stability of state unity."[14] In a state which is both federal and parliamentary, federalism may be justified either on the basis of authentic territorial decentralization against pluralistic powers entrenched in the government and the economy, or as "a counterweight to the prevailing pluralistic power complexes and the methods of their party politics."[15]

This point is relevant today, when a system of territorial articulation of power has become a function of the party system. When, as is the case of Argentina, centralized national parties control representation through closed lists, thus reducing democracy to a self-referential exercise, the diversity of the federated communities tends to disappear. As a reaction to this state of affairs, local particularistic parties come into being, as has happened in Spain, Italy, Scotland, etc. This explains why Schmitt's discussion of the Swiss case in *Verfaussunglehre*, whereby the most violent antinomy obtains between the federation and a democracy monopolized by national and centralized parties, is no longer relevant.

Although Schmitt theorized the decline of the nation-state, he was unable to go beyond its political horizon.[16] As Ayala points out, he does not leave space for a type of political coexistence different from the national (centralized) state.[17] Gary Ulmen synthetizes the question as follows: Schmitt basically considered federalism to be a phase in the passage between the plural and partial world of the nation-states and the contemporary

14. Schmitt, *Der Hüter der Verfassung*, *op. cit.*, p. 95.
15. *Ibid.*, pp. 95-96.
16. See José Caamaño Martínez: *El Pensamiento Jurídico Político de Carl Schmitt*, with a prologue by Luís Legaz y Lacambra (Santiago de Compostela: Editorial Porto y Cía, 1950), p. 159.
17. Ayala, in Schmitt, *Teoria de la Constitucion*, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

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world tending toward a homogenizing unity. Schmitt indicates a few fundamental antinomies in federalism: presupposing that a federation is a contract of status.[18] Schmitt sees in federalism some basic antinomies: the presupposition that a federation is a contract between more or less similar entities to guarantee protection, management, and integration implies a permanent tension between the autonomy of member states and federal integration. In time, the greatest force of the federation relative to the member states will produce a growing centralization, while the heterogeneity of the different units (e.g., as in the US) clashes with the democratic principle of a sovereign people, i.e., it transcends the differences between the member states and tends toward homogeneity. At this point, the contradiction seems unsolvable: without homogeneity, the democratic federation cannot function, but if homogeneity is achieved a unitary state comes into being. It is a process of gradual *reductio ad unum.*

In Schmitt, there is a permanent tension between his respect for the *jus publicum Europaeum*, i.e., international law, and his perception of the decline of the state: "Until recently, the European part of humanity lived in an epoch whose juridical concepts were completely characterized by the state and presupposed the state as the model of political unity. The epoch of the state is now coming to an end. Nothing more need be said. Together with the state, the whole superstructure of state-related concepts that established a Eurocentric science of constitutional and international law lasting 400 years is ending. The state as the model of political unity, the state as the bearer of the most astounding of all monopolies, namely the monopoly of political decision, this magnificent edifice of European form and occidental rationalism, is being dethroned. But its concepts are being retained and are even now becoming *classical.* Clearly, for most the word *classical* today sounds ambiguous and ambivalent, if not to say: ironic."[19] Despite Schmitt's clear position, there is a nostalgic tone in relation to the epoch which is ending, and a ominous forecast with respect to the one that is beginning. There is some hesitation to think beyond the state. Schmitt is clear, precise, and definitive in relation to the end of the state and the *jus publicum Europaeum*. He uses Proudhon's phrase, "whoever says 'humanity' means to deceive," and warns about the intensification of enmity in absolute positions hidden beneath the pretense of

18. G. L. Ulmen, "Schmitt and Federalism: Introduction to 'The Constitutional Theory of Federation'," in *Telos* 91 (Spring, 1992), pp. 16-25.

19. Carl Schmitt, *Der Begriff des Politischen: Text von 1932 mit einem Vorwort und drei Corollarien* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1963), p. 10.

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humanitarian intervention. At the same time, he is unable to prefigure a new juridical order that could approximate what existed with the *jus publicum Europaeum*. The political unity of the state was necessary for the global juridical order, while now humanity is heading toward a global political unity where the civilizing dimension of the political would not be able to achieve what the state attained earlier: internal peace and the elimination of internal enmity, i.e., the civilizing dimension of the political would be lost. Schmitt, however, was never interested in how internal peace was articulated internally. *Unitas* seduces him, but he is not attracted to *universitas* within which differences are articulated. Thus, he leaves that medieval thought which culminated with Dante and, later, reappeared with Althusius, as fundamental to the federal notion. Medieval legal experts spoke of local *universitates* ordered from the *domus*, the *vicus*, the *civitas*, the *provincia*, the *regnum*, the *imperium*. Schmitt may have seen in that trend the manifestation of the political romanticism he criticized earlier. Thus, Adam Müller's formulas concerning an "organic" and stratified concept of the state as a community superior to all other communities was continued by Gierke's work and taken up by one of Schmitt's contemporaries, Othmar Spann. On several occasions, Schmitt criticized organic theories that saw the state as a community among others, influencing the sovereign's *summa potestas*.[20] Thus, he cites Gierke's political theology in the search for the ultimate unity of the "cosmos" and of a system which Schmitt considers "superstition and reminiscent of medieval scholasticism," but does not mention state sovereignty.[21] In his book on Hobbes' *Leviathan*, Schmitt indicates that when the state confronted this medieval pluralism, the mechanisms for overcoming the anarchy of the Church's right of resistance led to civil war.[22]

As is well known, in the 1940s Schmitt began to speak of empires and

20. One of these occasions was a conference in 1930 in honor of Hugo Preuss, who had been Gierke's student. See George Schwab, *Carl Schmitt, La sfida dell'eccezione*, introduction by Franco Ferrarotti, tr. by Nicola Porto (Laterza: Bari, 1986), p. 92.

21. Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, *op. cit.*, pp. 24-25.

22. See Carl Schmitt, *The Leviathan in the State Theory of Thomas Hobbes: Meaning and Failure of a Political Symbol* (1938), tr. by George Schwab and Erna Hilfstein (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1996), pp. 71-72. Schmitt's attack, however, was directed especially at Harold Laski's and G.D.H. Cole's theory of pluralism, that between 1914 and 1925 had generated, from positions close to English Socialism and the Fabians, the decentralization and distribution of state power. Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, *op. cit.*, pp. 40-41. Schmitt's polemical notes are from 1927, when Laski had already abandoned pluralism. But the theory was useful to him for reassessing his argument concerning the superiority of the state.

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Großräume as political forms complementing or even replacing the state. In other words, he saw the possibility of a new *jus publicum* with less political bodies than in the previous one: "a balance of several *Großräume* create among themselves a new law of peoples at a new level and with new dimensions, yet endowed with certain analogies to the law of the European peoples of the 18th and 19th centuries, which was also based on a power equilibrium that sustained its structure."[23] He did not specify how these *Großräume* would be organized internally, but he did claim that they should maintain an internal homogeneity and that some larger member state would exercise a hegemonic role, such as the US did in relation to the rest of the Americas after the Monroe Doctrine established limits and banned foreign intervention.

Schmitt saw *Großräume* as providing a possible new *katechon*, i.e., a restrainer of chaos. This concept appears several times in Schmitt's mature work. In biblical terms, the *katechon* was to restrain any manifestation of the Antichrist, understood as global sovereignty, i.e. a uniform, unified world corresponding to industrial-technical thought. In every age, the *katechon* is established and maintains the *nomos* until it disappears with it. As a construction of European rationalism, these states are the authors of their own internal peace. For Schmitt, the *katechon* was the European system of states fighting among themselves in a regulated manner. He saw no virtue in federations, since they are provisional, i.e., temporary contracts subject to destabilization. Yet, despite his distrust of federal forms, he provided considerable juridical and political insights.

Schmitt saw himself as the intellectual *katechon* with respect to global sovereignty and the political unity of the world. He warned about the rift between statehood and federation, and admitted that the *nomos* of the earth was disappearing. He was not able to foresee the possibility of a new pluralistic *nomos* in which conflicts would be kept in check. But today, a federalism of the Lothingian Germanic variety (as elaborated by Proudhon) is reappearing as a comprehensive vision of the world to replace the federal state of the Hamiltonian variety, which he considered an equivocal juridical pastiche.[24] Reminiscent of the *e pluribus unum* of the North American federation, its formula might be: *ex uno plures*. The Schmittian *katechon* is gone. A global sovereignty is possible. But until

23. Carl Schmitt, *La Unidad del Mundo* (Madrid: Ateneo, 1951), p. 24.

24. See Luis María Bandieri, "El Federalismo Argentino en Novecientos o de Cómo Perdimos el Siglo," paper read at the "IV Congreso Nacional de Ciencia Politica," UCA – SAAP, Buenos Aires, November 17-20, 1999.

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recently, it was thought that sovereignty resided impersonally and ubiquitously in the global mechanisms, supports, and the self-sufficient programs of communicational, computational, and financial networks of modern technology.[25] Since there is no visible Leviathan, it was assumed that it was dead or asleep. After September 11, 2001, the Leviathan should manifest itself again to safeguard the globe against the threat of global and "privatized" terrorism.

These are times of Dantesque raging storms, and Schmitt's reflections provide some insights. As Hölderlin used to say, in danger one may also find salvation. Schmitt added that, at the edge of the abyss, in an exceptional situation, "the mind opens up to the arcane."

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25. See Luis María Bandieri, *¿Soberanía Global vs. Soberanía Nacional? (Hacia una Micropolítica Federativa)*, paper read at the *Primera Jornadas Nacionales de Derecho Natural*, San Luis, Argentina, held June 14-16 2001.

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Was Fascism Revolutionary?

Luciano Pellicani

When, in 1978, Domenico Settembrini's book on fascism as an "imperfect counter-revolution" appeared,[1] the violent reactions aroused by Renzo De Felice's notorious interview on fascism (1975) had just begun to die down. In this interview De Felice had dared to claim that fascism had been a "revolutionary phenomenon" and a "manifestation of left totalitarianism."[2] Predictably, Settembrini was also accused of seeking to reassess fascism. As Paolo Alatri put it in the columns of *Il Messaggero*, by focusing on fascism's revolutionary nature, Settembrini had provided an "interpretation that restored a stamp of nobility to it." Alatri did not hesitate to claim that Settembrini's book had all the requirements needed to become a "neo-fascist Bible." How could it have been otherwise? In the 1970s, Italy was still under the grip of the Left's ideological terrorism. "Revolution" was a sacred word that could not and should not be used to describe a movement such as fascism, concerning which the Third International had expressed a definitive historico-political judgment: "the openly terroristic dictatorship of the most chauvinistic and imperialistic reactionary elements of finance capital."[3] Thus, Settembrini's reading of the fascist phenomenon was intolerable; it struck at the very foundations of the theory that Mussolini's movement was a physiological emanation of capitalism: fascist ideology was "the logical outcome of the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie." This was crucial for the Italian Communist

1. Domenico Settembrini, *Fascismo, controrivoluzione imperfetta* (Rome: Seam, 2001).
2. Renzo De Felice, *Intervista sul fascismo* (Bari: Laterza, 1998), pp. 40 and 105.
3. The most sophisticated version of the Third International's interpretation of fascism is Nicos Poulantzas, *Fascism and Dictatorship: The Third International and the Problem of Fascism*, tr. by Judith White (London: Verso, 1979).

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Party: it allowed communists to pretend that they were the only real anti-fascists since they sought to destroy the foundation of what had produced fascism (capitalism) and tended to reproduce it because of its very logic.[4]

If Settembrini's evaluation of fascism was decidedly negative, his account of Bolshevism was even worse. The revolutionary charge of Bolshevism and its totalitarian vocation constituted — this was the conclusion of his study — the worst possible threat for a liberal society, compared to which the fascist revolution was but the lesser evil.[5] Born out of Mussolini's compromise with the monarchy, the Church, and capital, the fascist regime institutionalized a "long NEP," which explains why Italians were spared the atrocities inflicted on the Russians during the same period. However, they had to put up with and the regime's anti-bourgeois and anti-capitalistic propaganda. This accounts for the only apparently paradoxical phenomenon of the sudden migration after WWII of so many young fascist intellectuals to communism, the only movement capable of satisfying their revolutionary passion and their hatred for the middle-classes and capitalism, which they had absorbed within the Fascist Party.[6]

Having made the leap from the fascism to communism, these young people did not hesitate to declare themselves sworn enemies of fascism. But their actual status remained unchanged; by becoming "organic intellectuals" they did nothing but continue, under a different name, the spiritual war that fascism had been waging against liberal society and its best embodiment, America. Befuddled by massive doses of ideological opium, they were immersed in a total "false consciousness": deaf and blind to reality, they believed they were fighting for democracy and freedom. Instead, they were fighting for even a more totalitarian revolution than the fascist one. If the ideal of totalitarianism is the "all-inclusive state, i.e., the state from which no sphere of human activity remains extraneous,"[7] then the inevitable conclusion was that the communist revolution was the only one that deserved to be called totalitarian. For communism, "in the economic sphere, everything is *public* rather than *private law*."[8] Hence, the

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4. Palmiro Togliatti, "A proposito del Fascismo," in *Opere Scelte* (Rome: Editori Riuniti, 1974), p. 75.

5. Half a century earlier Gaetano Salvemini had come to this same conclusion. In a letter written at the end of 1926 to Zanotti Bianco, he had stated that to let the red extremists "do their thing" would have resulted in "a fascism worse than Mussolini's."

6. See Pietro Neglie, *Fratelli in camicia nera* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1996); and Paolo Buchignani, *Fascisti rossi* (Milan: Mondadori, 1998).

7. Norberto Bobbio, *Teoria generale della politica* (Turin: Einaudi, 1999), p. 109.

8. V.I. Lenin, *Opere complete* (Rome: Editori Riuniti, 1955) Vol. XLV, p. 487ff.

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program "to extend state intervention into the private legal sphere; to extend the right of the state to abrogate private contracts; to adapt to civil judicial relations not to the *corpus juris romani* but to the revolutionary juridical conscience."[9] The final goal was the annihilation of what Nikolai Bucharin, mindful of Lenin's lessons, used to call the "main enemy of communism," i.e., "widespread petty bourgeois spontaneity," and the creation of a "state civil society."[10]

Compared to this kind of revolution, which sought to absorb civil society entirely into the party-state's power structures, the fascist revolution was a much more feeble affair — despite the fact that Mussolini had claimed the fascist state was a "totalitarian state" that also extended over "the economic sphere."[11] This was because it had not abolished private property and the market. Yet, for all of the twenty years it was in power, the Fascist Party continued to nourish the idea that the final aim of the fascist revolution was the overthrow of capitalism and the creation of an economic system held together by a "supreme mind" — the planning organ, sole interpreter of the "will of the nation." At that point, socialism "would become absolute socialism and would call itself corporatist."[12] The peculiar result was a movement that, while claiming to be the sworn enemy of communism, could not help expressing its sympathies for the revolution the Bolsheviks were carrying out in Russia.[13]

In 1930, after having praised the "fertile manure provided by thousands of corpses" with which the communists were building their "proletarian civilization," Bruno Spampanato did not hesitate to claim that "Bolshevism in Russia was the prelude to fascism." It had the same objective of placing

9. *Ibid.*, p. 487. In light of Lenin's words, one can only be astounded at reading that "the Soviet system was not totalitarian" and that the total power that "Stalin would have liked to achieve" "would have scandalized Lenin and the other old Bolsheviks." See Eric J. Hobsbawm, *Age of Extremes* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1995), p. 460. One wonders if Hobsbawm has ever read Lenin's works.

10. Nikolai Bukharin, *Le vie della rivoluzione* (Rome: Editori Riuniti, 1980), pp. 48. and 253.

11. Benito Mussolini, *Spirito della Rivoluzione Fascista* (Milan: Hoepli, 1942), p. 402.

12. Ugo Spirito, *Il corporativismo* (Florence: Sansoni, 1970), pp. 417 and 375. Not all fascist theoreticians shared Spirito's rigorously collectivist concept of corporatism. Thus, while rejecting free enterprise and a self-regulated market, Carlo Costamagna did not agree with the "concept of the producer state," since it was "something typical of socialist and Soviet economic policy." See his *Dottrina del fascismo* (Rome: La Tavola Rotonda, 1982), p. 454.

13. This can be seen very clearly by leafing through major fascist publications such as *Critica Fascista* and *Gerarchia*. See Daniele Rambaudi, *Politica e argomentazione* (Milan: Marzorati, 1979) — a work no less fundamental than Settembrini's for understanding the anti-bourgeois vocation of the fascist revolution.

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social life under state control. And to confirm his thesis, he wrote: "Everything in the state. Nothing outside the state. Nothing against the state. This is what Mussolini has said. Lenin also subscribed to this proud uniform of the modern state."[14] Not satisfied with emphasizing the programmatic convergence of the fascist and Bolshevik revolutions, a year later Spampanato summarized the main ideological conflict of that time with the slogan: "Not Rome or Moscow, but Rome and Moscow or the old Europe." The old Europe meant enlightenment, liberalism, parliamentary democracy, reformist socialism, capitalism and the bourgeoisie. All of this was destined to be overthrown by the ongoing revolutionary process: "Capitalism has dug its own grave. In Rome and Moscow they have buried it, more or less swiftly. . . . Having come historically to the end of its trajectory, the bourgeois state is trying to prevent this. It is reacting and defending the one-class state (liberal-democratic regimes badly conceal class dictatorship) against the advent of the totalitarian state, of all classes. . . . Capitalism hinders the masses from moving toward fuller forms of collective organization . . . it attempts to strengthen bourgeois regimes with every possible compromise with the masses through leftist parties, with the intensification of a *modus vivendi* with the proletariat (high wages), with the nationalist revival and with the return to the old international policy whose moves are meant to turn the people's attention away from the domestic situation. Of course, the middle classes do not resign themselves to give way to the new ruling classes . . . just as they would never agree to become categories instead of classes or to enter in the state's totalitarian framework, unless they are forced to do so, as in Italy, or are swallowed up, as in Russia."[15]

Even more virulent was the anti-bourgeoisie battle fought in the pages of the journal *Gerarchia*. Icilio Petrone wrote that by now the bourgeoisie had had its day: born revolutionary, it has become a "reactionary class" which chains the people with "words of freedom"; and that "the anti-bourgeois revolutionary desire is the sole intuition of a truly new fascist civilization, i.e., proletarian and aristocratic, until these two terms can signify harmony."[16] In 1939, *Gerarchia* practically published a declaration of war against the bourgeoisie: "by targeting the bourgeoisie as one of its insensitive and

14. Bruno Spampanato, "Equazioni rivoluzionarie: dal bolscevismo al fascismo," in *Critica Fascista*, No. 8 (1930), p. 154.

15. Bruno Spampanato, "Universalità di Ottobre. Rome e Mosca o la vecchia Europa?" in *Critica Fascista*, No. 22 (1931), p. 436.

16. Icilio Petrone, "Civiltà e borghesia," in *Gerarchia*, No. 6 (1939), p. 415.

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cruel enemies . . . fascism has revealed its fundamental nature. The bourgeoisie is not a condensed, economic category, but a political and moral expression. . . . The bourgeois must be flushed out, stalked out like a wild rabbit; he has to be torn up like a weed in the grass."[17] Less truculent, but substantially identical were the anti-bourgeois invectives found in a collection of essays whose title, *The Trial of the Bourgeoisie*, was already a program. Here the bourgeoisie was defined as "the fascist revolution's no. 1 enemy" and it was claimed, *apertis verbis*, that "the more the fascist revolution provided freedom for genius and for ingenuity, the more it would bring about, without shouting, the liquidation of the bourgeoisie."[18] From his part, Julius Evola warned young fascists to be constantly aware that "within the Italian nation" there was "a cancer very difficult to eradicate": the "hypocritically idealistic bourgeoisie, ready to grasp every ideal and to exalt every noble principle, including that of the fatherland, of authority and order, to continue its game or at least to keep going."[19]

Naturally, anti-Americanism had to be among the *topoi* of fascist rhetoric. *Critica Fascista* obsessively reiterated that America, the most imperialistic of powers, had launched an "economic offensive against old Europe,"[20] and that the communist threat "paled before another one looming fearfully on the horizon and actually already in action: Americanism . . . — the typical expression of the degeneration of the great Western civilization," which was nothing but the "brutal battle of opposing interests," "unbridled competition," and "the profound isolation of the soul."[21] Against such an "amorphous, non-spiritual and standardized civilization," "the natural enemy of the old Europe," the "legitimate cry of rebellion" of fascist Italy had rung out, "called by God first to stem and then, because of the desertion of the heads of the European governments, to fight and triumph, all alone, over the American invasion."[22]

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17. Titta Madia, "Connotati," in *Gerarchia*, No. 6 (1939), pp. 398-399.

18. Edgardo Sulis, ed., *Processo alla borghesia* (Rome: Edizioni di Rome, 1939). On October 25, 1938, two years after the publication of this book, Mussolini gave a speech at the Fascist Party's National Council that he did not make public, but which he invited those present to transmit by word of mouth: "At the end of the regime's 16th year in power, I have identified an enemy, an enemy of our regime. This enemy is called the *bourgeoisie*." See Giordano Bruno Guerri, *Fascisti* (Milan: Mondadori, 2000), p. 223.

19. Julius Evola, *Nazionalismo, germanesimo, nazismo* (Genoa: Melita, 1989), p. 154.

20. Sergio De Cesare, "L'imperialismo economico yankee visto dall'osservatorio germanico," in *Critica Fascista* No. 24 (1929), p. 484.

21. Giuseppe Bronzini, "Il Fascismo e la difesa dell'Europa," in *Critica Fascista* No. 17 (1929), pp. 345-346.

22. G Manzella Frontini, "Italia e americanismo," in *Critica Fascista*, No. 8 (1928), p. 153.

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Given these ideological assumptions, it was entirely logical that, when Nazi Germany set off its war of annihilation against the "plutocracies in which a tiny capitalist clique dominated the masses,"[23] Giovanni Gentile's most faithful and authoritative disciple, Ugo Spirito, saw the historical opportunity to finally complete the great revolutionary enterprise for which fascism had been created: the liquidation of the bourgeoisie and the economic system — capitalism — on which it had constructed its world. According to the recently published "Report" sent by the theoretician of corporatism to Mussolini in the summer of 1941, thanks to its instinctive "revolutionary consciousness," the "European fascist proletariat" felt that the conflict between fascist Italy and Nazi Germany, on the one side, and England on the other, was a war between "opposing ideologies" and that it had to be fought on two fronts at once: the domestic and the international front, which were inextricably bound, "for the revolution to be really carried out within, the international capitalist presuppositions had to collapse."[24] The fascist revolution had to be international in the same way that capitalism was international. This is because," according to Spirito, "by now imperialism and capitalism had become so closely connected that it was impossible to conceive the elimination of one without also the elimination of the other."[25] Thus, it was necessary to transform the war in progress into a "revolutionary war," with the goal of taking the epochal step from "bourgeois" to "proletarian" civilization.[26] Hence, for Spirito, it followed, both logically and in terms of the fascist idea, that: "to use the lever of the revolutionary ideal and to really join Germany in a collaboration destined to achieve the fairest new order" based on "anti-bourgeois law" and fueled by the "revolution's anti-bourgeois spirit."[27]

Given all this, it is surprising that De Felice could claim that the anti-bourgeois rhetoric was "marginal" and that Settembrini was taking "the whole discourse on fascism back ten years" (and even throwing it back

23. Adolf Hitler, *Discorsi di guerra* (Rome: Ronzoni, 1941), p. 137.
24. Ugo Spirito, *Guerra rivoluzionaria* (Rome: Fondazione Ugo Spirito, 1989), pp. 68-69.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 89.
26. This was an extremely difficult undertaking, because in the US and England "the middle-class mentality had seeped into the proletariat and the path toward fascism was relatively longer. However, it would have been accelerated (and was already accelerating) by the impossibility to continue exploiting proletarians worldwide, as in the past. This would have prevented the embourgeoisification of the Anglo-Saxon proletariat and prompted them to stand up for their rights against the capitalist classes. The war's revolutionary function would not have stopped at the frontiers of any country." *Ibid.*, p. 127.
27. *Ibid.*, pp. 86, 73 and 99.

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"into the quicksand of ideological interpretations."[28] Thanks to Zeev Sternhell's meticulous reconstructions, which clearly shows that fascism was an anti-bourgeois revolutionary phenomenon — "the direct result of a very specific revision of Marxism"[29] — today the pioneering value of Settembrini's work is obvious. Contrary to De Felice, it paved the way for a line of research essential for understanding not only the fascist phenomenon, but also and above all the dramatic crisis of liberal civilization between the two wars.[30] De Felice's evaluation of Settembrini's work was even more disconcerting because, in an article written in 1982 but published only recently, he had acknowledged that the "prospect of fascist totalitarianism was a Socialist prospect."[31] This was the logical conclusion of the claim that Jacob Talmon's account of totalitarian democracy was "one of the keys to understanding fascism."[32] But it also contradicted what De Felice had claimed in the first volume of his *opus magnum*, i.e., that "true fascism" had been one of the objects of the "sole conservative-reactionary front of the agricultural, commercial and industrial bourgeoisie."[33]

This means that De Felice finally recognized that fascism had created a *sui generis* form of revolutionary socialism and had come to conclusions not all that different from Settembrini's. Surprisingly, this did not lead him to change his opinion of Settembrini's book. Had he done so, it could have precipitated a confrontation that could have helped breach that granite barrier of ideological prejudices and stereotypes that "organic intellectuals" had built around fascism. Despite being praised by leading authorities such as Rosario Romeo and Piero Melograni, Settembrini's book did not become the focus of historiographic debate. This did not even occur in 1991, with the publication of another crucial work[34] for understanding the deep and wide roots of the anti-bourgeois hatred that

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28. De Felice, *Intervista sul fascismo*, *op. cit.*, p. 99.
29. Zeev Sternhell, Mario Sznajder, and Maia Asheri, *The Birth of Fascist Ideology* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), p. 12.
30. After the publication of *Fascismo, controrivoluzione imperfetta*, in 1991, Settembrini continued his analysis by publishing in *Mondoperaio* a long review of De Felice's penultimate tome of his monumental biography of Mussolini. This was followed by *Storia dell'idea antiborghese in Italia* (Laterza, Bari 1991) and, finally, by his essay "Dal Predominio dell'Ideologia alla Progettazione Sociale," published in the anthology *L'eredità del Novecento* (Istituto dell'Enciclopedia Italiana, Rome 2001).
31. Renzo De Felice, "Il Modello Fascista Italiano e il Problema della sua Riproducibilità Politica," in *Ideazione*, No. 4 (2000).
32. De Felice, *Intervista sul fascismo*, *op. cit.*, p. 106.
33. See Renzo De Felice, *Mussolini il rivoluzionario* (Turin: Einaudi, 1965), p. 662.
34. Settembrini, *Storia dell'idea antiborghese in Italia*, *op. cit.*

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fascist intellectuals had harbored during the fascist regime. It could not have been otherwise. A Fascist Party that claimed to be totalitarian had to see bourgeois society — reign of "general competition, of private interests freely pursuing their aims"[35] centered on "the right to private property" and "individual freedom"[36] — as the major obstacle to the full implementation of its program, predicated on the eradication of "any distinction between . . . the individual and the state," because "the will of the state is a divine will."[37]

Fascism did not destroy capitalism, and Mussolini constantly pointed out that the regime did not mean to "attack the right to property."[38] But could this right be reconciled with fascism's totalitarian proclivities and its declaration of war against the bourgeois mentality? This was the question that Spirito asked and that the fascist regime, contradicting the fascist movement, had evaded, without ever giving up its claim to be revolutionary. Naturally, this state of affairs produced an acute sense of frustration in all those who had identified *toto corde* with the original plan.[39] Since fascism did not disengage economic life from capitalism it was an incomplete totalitarianism. Had it been coherent with its principles, it would have had to extend the statification of all of civil society. Only then, would the fascist revolution have been faithful to itself, which means that it would have become the Italian path to Bolshevism. Once the individualist and calculating bourgeois mentality is seen as the main obstacle to authentic community life based on the "identification of individual and society and the coincidence of personal and social goals,"[40] the only logical solution is the replacement of the market's "invisible hand" with the "visible hand"[41] of

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35. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, "La sacra famiglia," in *Opere complete* (Rome: Editori Riuniti, 1970) Vol. IV, p. 126ff.

36. Karl Marx, "Sulla questione ebraica," in *Opere complete*, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 177.

37. Giovanni Gentile, *Genesi e struttura della società* (Milan: Mondadori, 1954), pp. 100 and 154.

38. Mussolini, *Spirito della Rivoluzione Fascista*, *op. cit.*, p. 278. But he also claimed that "the fascist state directed and controlled every enterprise, from fisheries up to heavy industry" and that "capital... had no means to oppose" the "state's growing intervention." See Emil Ludwig, *Colloqui con Mussolini* (Milan: Mondadori, 2000), p. 118.

39. As Spampanato wrote, "the 1919 postulates were inspired by an authentic national socialism. Instead, there was the paradoxical spectacle of a capitalist predominance that buffered and slowed down revolutionary laws and mandates. Economic life had to be disengaged from capitalism. It did not happen." Cited in Luca Lionello Rimbotti, *Il fascismo di sinistra* (Rome: Settimo Sigillo, 1989), pp. 155-156.

40. Ugo Spirito, *Il comunismo* (Florence: Sansoni, 1965), p. 175.

41. See Luciano Pellicani, *Le sorgenti della vita. Modi di produzione e forme di dominio* (Rome: Seam, 1997).

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the planning state — sole master of the "sources of life." This is precisely what fascists intellectuals believed. Not by chance, in his famous Campidoglio speech, Giovanni Gentile defined communists as "impatient corporatists." But if fascism — like National Socialism — sought to raze the bourgeois world to the ground, why did the owning classes facilitate its rise to power?

Today, it can no longer be claimed that the movements created by Mussolini and Hitler were heavily financed by big capital.[42] On the contrary, save for rare exceptions, capitalists viewed these movements, which made no mystery about their revolutionary proposals, with reserve and even apprehension. They did, however, end up accepting the *fait accompli*, which they saw as a lesser evil than the threat of a communist revolution, which they could only view with horror, since its stated objective was the extermination o f the bourgeoisie. Subsequently, by dis solving labor organizations — parties, trade unions, cooperatives, etc. — and thus suppressing the class struggle, fascism guaranteed social peace. The fact remains that, "despite the indubitable advantages that it had managed to gain from fascism, the *grand bourgeoisie* never accepted it completely. They were prevented by psychological and cultural reasons — even by differences in style and taste. Above all, they feared a) the tendency of the fascist state to control economic activities; b) the tendency of the fascist élite to transform itself into an independent ruling class and to alter the balance of the compromise to its advantage; c) Mussolini's foreign policy that was becoming increasingly aggressive and reflected less and less the true interests of Italy and the *grand bourgeoisie*."[43]

In addition, as Filippo Turati defined it in a speech to the Chamber of Deputies on November 17, 1922, besides being indispensable to workers for achieving full citizenship, freedom was "the vital oxygen of capitalism itself" and constituted the "*sine qua non conditio* for the flourishing of industry and civilization."[44] In a state with a single-party dictatorship which, moreover, claimed to control the forces of production in homage to the totalitarian principle of the primacy of politics, the

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42. See Piero Melograni, *Gli industriali e Mussolini* (Milan: Longanesi, 1972); and Henry A. Turner, *German Big Business and the Rise of Hitler* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985).

43. Renzo De Felice, "Il fascismo Italiano e le Classi Medie," in Stein Ugelvik Larsen, Bernt Hagvet and Jan Petter Myklebust, eds., *I fascisti* (Florence: Ponte alle Grazie, 1996), p. 353.

44. Cited from Piergiorgio Zunino, *Interpretazione e memoria del fascismo* (Bari: Laterza, 2000), p. 40.

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entrepreneurial bourgeoisie could only feel, in the words of the future president of Confindustria, Antonio Stefano Benni, "like Daniel in the lions' den."[45] But Marxist-Leninist scholars have always refused to accept the elementary truth — explicitly and repeatedly recognized by Marx — that the most useful state for capitalism and the entrepreneurial bourgeoisie is the liberal state, i.e., a state with "civil society as its natural base" and which "in universal human rights recognizes that this is its natural base."[46] Moreover, it would have been enough to look at the Third Reich's economy to realize the falsity of the thesis, obsessively reiterated by communist experts without a shred of proof, that "the Nazis constituted the auxiliary body of financial capital."[47] In Nazi Germany, there was a market, "but it was not a free market, and most decisions taken by enterprise owners were not free either."[48] They were decisions of a clearly political nature, imposed by the totalitarian party which controlled the state and assessed everything on the basis of rigid ideological criteria. The result was that "property was no longer a private matter, but a kind of state concession."[49] Thus, like a sword of Damocles, the power of state intervention and confiscation hung over property-owners. With the war, this power grew, and Hitler's vital goals became clear: "total control of the economy; total command over resources; total direction of wages, prices, production; total organization of credit, manpower, transportation, and planning."[50]

For all these reasons, recent historiography has not only moved away from the Marxist theory of fascism as an "agent of Capital," but has come to see it as "the greatest obstacle to a global understanding of the

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45. Cited from Ronald Sarti, *Fascism and the Industrial Leadership in Italy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971), p. 23.

46. Marx and Engels, *La sacra famiglia*, *op. cit.*, p. 126.

47. Charles Bettelheim, *L'economia della Germania nazista* (Milan: Mazzotta, 1973), p. 284.

48. Avraham Barkai, *Nazi Economics* (Oxford: Berg, 1990), p. 248.

49. David Schoenbaum, *Hitler's Social Revolution* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1967), p. 147.

50. *Ibid.*, p. 113. After having proudly claimed that, if the German economy had solved its problems, it was due "to the fact that the management of the national economy has gradually passed into the hands of the state," in the summer of 1942 Hitler pointed out that "even after the war we cannot give up state management of the economy, because otherwise every private group would think only of the satisfaction of its own desires. Since in the great mass of the population each individual is also animated by selfish goals, an orderly and systematic operation of the national economy is impossible without state management." See Henry Picker, *Conversazioni di Hitler a tavola* (Milan: Longanesi, 1970), p.197.

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phenomenon."[51] Fascism was an epochal phenomenon characterized by the "revolt against bourgeois society, its moral values, its political and social structures, its lifestyle."[52] It emerged as an intellectual and moral resistance to the atomization brought about by the industrial revolution, and ended up in the "exultation of what was conceived as a unit of fundamental solidarity, the nation."[53] In the name of the nation, it launched a revolutionary call to arms both against pluralistic democracy — rejected as incompatible with the ideal of unity[54] — and against Marxist socialism which, by advocating class struggle, disintegrated national solidarity. Dominated by the "economic man who wanted to act always on the basis of the maximum economic profit,"[55] bourgeois society was to be replaced by the society of all the people, based on the subordination of individual to national interests.

In a nutshell, fascism was driven by a powerful communitarianism, which not only saw liberalism as its *bête noir*,[56] but also turned it into what Radek called "a socialism of the middle classes"[57] — what Georges Valois sought to capture with his formulation: "Nationalism+Socialism=Fascism."[58] This is exactly what Settembrini claimed, anticipating Sternhell's independently reached conclusions:[59] fascism is a moderate, nationalist form of revolutionary socialism. Here, revolutionary socialism means a declaration of permanent war on capitalist/bourgeois society,

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51. Zeev Sternhell, *Neither Right nor Left* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), p. 18. See also A. James Gregor, *Interpretations of Fascism* (Morristown, NJ: General Learning Press, 1974); Stanley G. Payne, *A History of Fascism* (London: UCL Press, 1995); Pierre Milza, *Les fascismes* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1991); Roger Griffin, *The Nature of Fascism* (London: Routledge, 1993); Mark Neocleous, *Fascism* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1997).

52. Sternhell, *Neither Right nor Left*, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

53. Zeev Sternhell, *La droite révolutionnaire* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1978), p. 17.

54. The founder of the Falange summarized the fascist program as follows: "All the aspirations of the new state could be summarized in one word: *Unity*." See José Antonio Primo de Rivera, *Scritti e discorsi di battaglia* (Rome: Settimo Sigillo, 1993), p. 111. This led him to the logical conclusion that "one needed courage to destroy capitalism." See Maurice Bardèche, *Che cosa è il fascismo?* (Rome: Volpe, 1990), p. 51.

55. *Fronte economico*, "Notiziario settimanale dell'Ufficio stampa del Pnf," (1941). Cited from Emilio Gentile, *La via italiana al totalitarismo* (Florence: La Nuova Italia Scientifica, 1995), p. 274.

56. Julius Evola, *Il fascismo* (Rome: Volpe, 1974), p. 33.

57. Cited from Adriano Romualdi, *Il fascismo come fenomeno europeo* (Rome: Il Settimo Sigillo, 1984), p. 69.

58. Georges Valois, *Le fascisme* (Paris: Nouvelle Librairie Nationale, 1927), p. 21.

59. See Zeev Sternhell, "Les convergences fascistes," in Pascal Ory, ed., *Nouvelle histoire des idées politiques* (Paris: Hachette, 1987), where fascism is formally defined as a "Socialism without proletariat" (p. 553).

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seeking to create a monolithic organic community.

For decades, the real nature of fascism has been obscured by historians' tendency to see its ideas as nothing but "derivations" and tools to mobilize the masses by articulating an organic worldview.[60] It was polemical in confronting liberal values, and positive in that it saw itself as the agent of a spiritual revolution leading to a "new civilization" and a "new man."[61] As Emilio Gentile has written, "the myth of the new man was very important in the ideological debate of the various fascist movements, beginning in the second half of the 1920s. It was based on the conviction that there was a profound social crisis in traditional bourgeois society and culture. This society had, as its ideal, the rational and optimistic Cartesian man, trusting in truth and in his logical means to understand and describe clearly and distinctly — a man sure of his destiny in a world governed by Reason and by the repetition of immutable laws, aiming at an undefined progress, in the constant development of wealth and industrial society."[62]

The two things — lack of confidence in the values that for centuries had guided Western civilization, and hopes for regeneration that, in all of Europe, gave rise to the myth of the new man — are closely interrelated. Without the former, the latter would be inexplicable. This leads to the conclusion that, like its heterozygous twin, Bolshevism, fascism was more than an "error *against* culture." It was an "error *of* culture"[63] or, in Julien Benda's famous formulation, "the treason of intellectuals,"[64] whose spiritual roots went back to the end of the 19th century. Thus, backed by a formidable documentation, Sternhell has claimed that "whoever persisted in

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60. See Ernst Nolte, *Three Faces of Fascism* (New York: Mentor, 1965).

61. This is why "fascism's sense of the past had nothing to do with reactionary nostalgia, which constituted the substance of Maurras' doctrine in France." See Piergiorgio Zunino, *L'ideologia del fascismo* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1995), p. 69.

62. Emilio Gentile, *Le origini dell'ideologia fascista* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1996), p. 493.

63. The is Giacomo Noventa's formulation. See Augusto Del Noce, *Il suicidio della rivoluzione* (Milan: Rusconi, 1978), pp. 32ff.

64. The number of European intellectuals who saw fascism or Nazism as the dawn of a new civilization is impressive: Sorel, Marinetti, D'Annunzio, Gentile, Pirandello, Michels, Sombart, Freud, Jung, Heisenberg, Heidegger, Schmitt, Celine, Pound, Drieu La Rochelle, Eliade, Jouvenel, De Man, etc. Equally impressive is the list of intellectuals who were seduced by the siren of communism and who "sacrificed their intellect" on the altar of the proletarian revolution. This has led Tzvetan Todorov to write: "Whereas for centuries Western countries have taken the path of democracy, intellectuals, who in theory represent the most enlightened part of the population, have instead opted for violent and tyrannical regimes. If the vote in those countries had been limited to intellectuals alone, we would now be living under totalitarian regimes." See Tzvetan Todorov, *L'uomo spaesato* (Rome: Donzelli, 1997), p. 103.

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considering fascism nothing but a result of the Great War, a simple defensive reflex of the bourgeoisie against the crisis that followed the conflict, is doomed to misunderstand this crucial 20th century phenomenon. Rather, fascism emblematically embodies an extreme rejection of the culture predominant at the beginning the century, involving all of European civilization. In the fascism between the two wars — in Mussolini's regime as in other fascist movements in continental Europe — there was not one important idea that had not been slowly matured during the quarter of a century that preceded 1914."[65]

Yet, the mythology elaborated in France within the context of revolutionary trade unionism and National Socialism — a mythology animated by the total rejection of bourgeois society and by the hope of creating, with the systematic use of violence, a new civilization antithetical to liberal, rationalist and individualist values — would have remained in the laboratory of ideas if what Stefan Zweig has called the "world of security"[66] had not been shattered by the devastating consequences of the imperialist war senselessly set off by the great European powers. Everything happened as had been predicted in a prophetic book published in 1898 by the Polish banker I. S. Bloch: total mobilization would devastate the social arrangement of continental Europe, and a new anthropologic type would appear, impregnated with trench psychology and, because of this, ready to transfer the means and methods of armed struggle into political life. This was an anthropological type uninterested in reason, but simply committed to impose his opinions by recourse to direct action and by proclaiming "violence as the *prima ratio*."[67]

Because of the enormous mass of war veterans, in Italy politics ceased to be seen as a "ritualized" conflict and became an "existential duel" predicated on a "friend-enemy" confrontation. Immersed in a "special atmosphere of excitement and delirium," this mass "saw itself at the threshold of a new life."[68] It also felt it had the right to use violence to materialize its chiliastic aspirations. This brought about a situation of latent civil war. The Bolsheviks' take-over of the Winter Palace reactivated the myth of the proletarian revolution with its extreme passions and sectarian spirit. Blinded by what Turati called the "messianic

65. Sternhell, Sznajder and Asheri, *The Birth of Fascist Ideology*, *op. cit.*, p. 13.
66. Stefan Zweig, *Il mondo di ieri* (Milan: Mondadori, 1996), p. 9.
67. José Ortega y Gassett, *La ribellione delle masse*, in *Scritti politici* (Turin: Utet, 1979), pp. 857-858.
68. Angelo Tasca, *Nascita e avvento del fascismo* (Bari: Laterza, 1967), p. 541 and 557.

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expectation"[69] of the catastrophe-regeneration that would have magically opened the gates of the millenary kingdom of freedom, maximalist socialists and communists outdid each other not only in frightening the *grand bourgeoisie*, but also the middle classes. In 1919, the Italian Socialist Party abandoned its 1892 statute and adopted a new one stating people and things were now ripe for the "violent conquest of political power by the workers" and for the installation of the "transitory regime of the dictatorship of the proletariat."[70] Two months later, Antonio Gramsci described the destiny of the middle classes following the inevitable victory of the revolutionary proletariat as follows: "The lower and middle bourgeoisie are the barrier of corrupt, dissolute and putrescent humanity with which capitalism defends its economic and political power — a servile, despicable humanity, a humanity of hit-men and lackeys. It has become the servant-turned-master, who wants to take from production higher cuts not only from the wages of the working-class, but even from the capitalists' share. To expel it from the social field with iron and fire, as if they were locusts infesting a semi-destroyed field, means cleansing the national system of production and exchange of its oppressive trappings, which suffocate it and prevent it from functioning. It means purifying the social environment."[71]

Faced with such declarations of war and extermination, it is not surprising that the political scene in the years immediately following WWI was dominated by the "fear of Bolshevism," which played such a major role in the final victory of fascism. Neither is it surprising that the anti-proletarian hatred of the displaced or threatened middle-classes[72] — already resentful of the victories of the working class that they already experienced as a painful wound to their prestige — exploded violently and found in Mussolini the charismatic demagogue who intensified it, gave it direction, and provided it with an exalting political goal: a national revolution to bring about the regeneration of Italian society out of its "state of moral inferiority."[73] Actually, the national revolution was, firstly and foremost, a "battle by the lower middle-classes, wedged between capitalism and proletariat, like a third party between two litigants."[74]

The fascist squads' methods to keep the proletariat in check prompted

69. Filippo Turati, *Le vie maestre del socialismo* (Morano: Naples 1966), p. 342.
70. Cited in Emilio Gentile, *Storia del Partito fascista* (Bari: Laterza, 1989), p. 83.
71. Antonio Gramsci, *L'Ordine Nuovo* (Turin: Einaudi, 1975), p. 61.
72. Gino Germani, *Autoritarismo, fascismo e classi sociali* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1975).
73. Mussolini, *Spirito della Rivoluzione Fascista*, *op. cit.*, p. 71.
74. Luigi Salvatorelli, *Nazionalfascismo* (Turin: Einaudi, 1977), p. 12.

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Anna Kuliscioff, Giovanni Amendola, and Gaetano Salvemini to define fascism as a "right-wing Bolshevism."[75] Mussolini's movement exhibited more than a few of Bolshevism's typical traits: the military conception of political battle, the merciless desire to get rid of its enemies, the scorn of middle-class values, the fanatic conviction of being the bearer of a new civilization, the determination to reshape every physical and moral thought in light of revolutionary ideology.[76] Thus, during the XII congress of the Russian Communist Party, Bukharin acknowledged that the fascists had attended the Bolsheviks' school and learned much from it. The "favorite son" of the party Lenin had created claimed that: "A characteristic of the fascist fighting methods is that, more than with any other party, the fascists have adopted and implemented the experience of the Russian Revolution. From a formal viewpoint, i.e., in terms of their techniques and political procedures, it is a perfect application of Bolshevik tactics — specifically, of Russian Bolshevism, in the sense of a rapid military concentration of forces and of energetic action by a firm and compact military organization, and in the sense of a precise system using its own forces, logistic committees, mobilization, etc., as well as the merciless annihilation of the adversary, when this is necessary and dictated by circumstances."[77]

By gaining power with that singular *coup d'état* that came to be called the "march on Rome," and by installing the one-party dictatorship, fascism proclaimed through Alfredo Rocco that the age of the liberal state, agnostic about the supreme national values, had ended and that the new state would become the "guardian of public morality." Furthermore, "in the name of this high duty," it would intervene "to repress the lies, corruption and all forms of deviation and degeneration of public and private morality."[78] For his part, after having extolled the "billy-clubs of the fascist squads as God given," Giovanni Gentile pointed out that the real reason for fascism's success was not due to its systematic use of violence, but the fact that it was "a total concept of life" meant to reform the Italian

75. See Zunino, *Interpretazione e memoria del fascismo*, *op. cit.*, pp. 49-50.

76. See Pierre Drieu La Rochelle, *Le radici giacobine dei totalitarismi. Bolscevismo, nazismo e fascismo* (Chieti: Tabula Fati, 1998).

77. Cited from Vittorio Strada, *Totalitarismo e storia*, in Sergej Kulesov and Vittorio Strada, *Il fascismo russo* (Venice: Marsilio, 1998), p. 53. The similarities between Bolshevism and fascism were not merely formal. Thus, during a meeting of the Central Committee of the Italian Communist Party, Ruggiero Grieco did not hesitate to claim: "We communists appropriate the 1919 fascist program, which is a program of peace, freedom, and meant to defend workers' interests. We say: we struggle for the realization of this program." Cited in Buchignani, *Fascisti rossi*, *op. cit*, p. 35.

78. Alfredo Rocco, *La formazione dello Stato fascista* (Milan: Giuffrè, 1938), p. 798.

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people, by injecting in them an ethics of "sacrifice and hard work."[79]

As "the ethical state," the fascist regime operated as a "great educator"[80] obsessively engaged in creating the "new man," in the name of what Fascist Party militants proudly called "Mussolini's principle of continuing revolution." This meant intense and constant indoctrination to eradicate the critical spirit and replace it with blind faith in the Duce's infallibility. Prompted by the same totalitarian pretension, Mussolini proclaimed himself to be the institutional guardian of a new religion no less exclusionary than Roman Catholicism, in the conviction that only a lived doctrine such as an all-encompassing faith could bring about the Italians' intellectual and moral metamorphosis. Already in 1925, in order to legitimize the full fascistization of society and the annihilation of the "nation's enemies," Roberto Farinacci had claimed: "Fascism is not a party, but a religion. It is the nation's future. Thus, we have the right to demand that everything be fascist, that everything be at the service of the fascist regime."[81] A few years later, Balbino Giuliano, the Minister of National Education, reiterated this view even more emphatically: "The fascist idea has all the features of great religious ideas, which like the sun is always the same and always different."[82] Because of its aspiration to become the "religion of the proletarian nation," fascism should not have been merely a militia. It also had to become a mysticism. This was more than merely a "Party, it was an Order. Those who belonged to it had to have a great faith" in the fascist revolution's "religious concept of life" and in the "triumph of its principles worldwide."[83] Rightly therefore, Emilio Gentile placed fascism "in the broader phenomenon of the sacralization of politics in modern society."[84]

Precisely because of this, one cannot talk, along with Gentile, about

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79. Giovanni Gentile, "Che cosa è il fascismo," in *Politica e cultura* (Florence: Le Lettere, 1990), Vol. I, pp. 27 and 36.

80. Emilio Gentile, *La via italiana al totalitarismo*, *op. cit.*, p. 186.

81. Cited in Alberto Aquarone, *L'organizzazione dello Stato totalitario* (Turin: Einaudi, 1978), p. 70.

82. Balbino Giuliano, "L'idea etica del fascismo," in *Gerarchia* (November 1932). In the same year, Mussolini had proclaimed that: "Fascism is a religious concept of life, in which man is seen in his immanent relation with a higher law, with an objective will that transcends particular individuals and elevates them to the level of conscious members of a spiritual society." No different is Giovanni Gentile's concept of fascism, which repeatedly emphasizes not only the state's ethical nature, but also the "reawakening of the Italians' religious consciousness" brought about by the fascist revolution.

83. Mussolini, *Spirito della Rivoluzione Fascista*, *op. cit.*, p. 406.

84. Emilio Gentile, *Il culto del Littorio* (Bari: Laterza, 1994), p. 401.

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any kind of "totalitarian modernity."[85] The expression is an oxymoron: a contradiction in terms.[86] Modernity means secularization, "disenchantment of the world," and "life without sacred values"[87] — the exact opposite of the sacralization of politics and the elevation of the state to the level of the "Absolute, before which individuals and groups are relative."[88] This is why fascism must be considered to be one of the many manifestations of the "revolt against the modern world" that has characterized the "century of ideologies."[89] Fueled by the rejection of Enlightenment reason and by its confrontation with the civilization of rights and freedoms, it opened an intellectual and moral chasm in the heart of Europe and led to the "worldwide civil war"[90] — an ideological war fought without pause, since what was at stake was the enemy's annihilation.

This is not all. One of the distinguishing traits of modernization is the progressive expansion of "elective action"[91] — what Constant called the "freedom of the moderns," based on "the peaceful enjoyment of private independence"[92] — that fascism was totally against. Fascism was also against the irremediably selfish bourgeois concept of life, while exalting heroic virtues and a "morality of sacrifice and militancy."[93] Hence, the militarization not only of politics, but of all of society, so that

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85. Emilio Gentile, *Le origini dell'ideologia fascista*, *op. cit.*, p. 3. An identical account is provided by Ludovico Incisa di Camerana, *Fascismo, populismo, modernizzazione* (Rome: Antonio Pellicani, 1999), pp. 400ff.

86. See Luciano Pellicani, "Modernity and Totalitarianism," in *Telos* 112 (Summer 1998), pp. 3-22.

87. See Luciano Pellicani, *Modernizzazione e secolarizzazione* (Milan: Il Saggiatore, 1997); and José Ortega y Gasset, "Una interpretacion de la historia universal," in *Obras completas* (Madrid: Revista de Occidente, 1965), Vol. IX, p. 130.

88. Mussolini, *Spirito della Rivoluzione Fascista*, *op. cit.*, p. 400.

89. Julius Evola, *Rivolta contro il mondo moderno* (Rome: Edizioni Mediterranee, 1969). Curzio Malaparte clearly saw that fascism had to be radically hostile to the spirit of modernity: "the Italian revolutionary phenomenon is, or should be, anti-modern, i.e., anti-European. . . . fascism is the last phase of the Counter Reformation . . . and the Russian revolutionary phenomenon, which fights against the modern spirit . . . is the historical fulfillment of the Italian revolutionary phenomenon. They help each other in the common task of disintegrating modernity. Neither of the two is conceivable, practicable or right without the other." See Curzio Malaparte, "La rivolta dei Santi maledetti," (1921), in *L'Europa vivente* (Florence: Vallecchi, 1961), p. 135. See also Karl D. Bracker, *Il Novecento secolo delle ideologie* (Bari: Laterza, 1985).

90. Ernst Nolte, *Nazionalsocialismo e bolscevismo* (Florence: Sansoni, 1988), p. 6.

91. Gino Germani, *The Sociology of Modernization* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books, 1981), pp. 117f.

92. Benjamin Constant, *Principes de politique* (Paris: Hachette, 1997), p. 36.

93. Giovanni Gentile, "Origini e dottrina del fascismo," in *Politica e cultura*, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 421.

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Italy as a whole would become "an immense legion marching under the symbols of fascism toward a greater tomorrow."[94] Born in the war, fascism lived for the war — "the sole world hygiene" — and tried to transform Italians into soldier-citizens, permanently mobilized by the slogan "believe, obey, fight." Here also, fascism was profoundly anti-modern. It was a gigantic attempt to reverse the historical movement that had led Western civilization from a "military" to an "industrial" society. It extolled the backward looking ideal of the "return to the land" to save Italy from what Mussolini scornfully called "supercapitalism" and to which he ascribed the "standardization of the human race from the cradle to the grave."[95] To the extent that fascism was the political expression of the class interests of a humanistic petty bourgeoisie lacking market skills, it had to be hostile to modern industrial civilization, focused on the logic of catallactics and international competition.[96]

Actually, the "fascist economy was a planned and closed economy waiting for war to break out."[97] This was not only because its ideal was economic autarchy, but also because its totalitarian vocation clashed with the logic of the "open society." The total reshaping of the Italian character to create the new man meant the hermetic closure of society to prevent the penetration of the pernicious ideas of "pluto-democracies," against which fascism saw itself in a state of permanent war. It also meant the destruction of the market system because, as long as the economy was based on free initiative, a large part of thoughts and actions would have escaped the control of the party-state.[98] The regime, however, never implemented what fascist ideology required: the entire collectivization of the economy to achieve the full collectivization of consciousness. This is why Settembrini defines fascism as an "imperfect counter-revolution." Despite its "violent hostility toward the spirit of modernity,"[99] to the extent that it did not abolish that all-important institution of bourgeois society and of individualistic culture, i.e., private

94. Mussolini, *Spirito della Rivoluzione Fascista*, *op. cit.*, p. 207.
95. *Ibid.*, pp. 352 and 301.
96. See Piero Melograni, "Fascismo: reazione contro la civiltà industriale," in *Mondoperaio*, No. 6 (1985).
97. Tasca, *Nascita e avvento del fascismo*, *op. cit.*, p. 567.
98. Having called for the "effective subordination of the concept of property to the state's supreme interests," Berto Ricci concluded that it was essential "to recreate the fascism-capitalism antithesis," because "if the means of production remain untouched, nothing could be accomplished." See *La rivoluzione fascista* (Milan: Barbarossa, 1996), p. 60,
99. Settembrini, *Storia dell'idea antiborghese in Italia*, *op. cit.*, p. 340.

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property, it was not consistently and completely totalitarian like National Socialism and, *a fortiori*, communism — "the only known truly original totalitarianism, the only one that has created its own enduring style"[100] by building a system in which state and civil society were one and the same.

Fascism failed to become completely totalitarian not only because it did not do away with the market; it did not manage to do so because it was lacking something essential in its genetic code: the idea of the purification of the world through the extermination of corrupt and corrupting elements. This idea is clearly present in both Bolshevism and Nazism. Lenin claimed that the historical mission of the communist revolution is that of "ridding the accursed capitalist society . . . *of every harmful insect.*"[101] This is a "marsh"[102] that has to be disinfected by using "systematic violence against the bourgeoisie and its accomplices"[103] — "first of all the Mensheviks and the Social Revolutionaries,"[104] but also "workers profoundly corrupted by capitalism."[105] This is a cruel, merciless but absolutely necessary operation if one really wants to eradicate the "greed, the sordid, hateful, frantic greed of the sack of money."[106] Anyway, what right to exist can be had by those who are not men but foul "parasites,"[107] who live, like "vampires,"[108] feeding off the blood of workers? Besides being indispensable for purifying the world, it is a moral duty to eliminate them.

Armed with these moral principles and fanatically certain of possessing a rigorously scientific and therefore "omnipotent" doctrine,"[109] as soon as he gained power Lenin ordered his followers — whom he had long educated to the idea that communism could only triumph by "implacably exterminating the enemies of freedom"[110] — to immediately

100. Strada, *Totalitarismo e storia*, *op. cit.*, p. 99.
101. Lenin, "Come organizzare l'emulazione," in *Opere complete*, *op. cit.*, Vol. XXVI, pp. 394 and 390.
102. Lenin, "Che fare?" in *Opere complete*, *op. cit.*, Vol. V, p. 327.
103. Lenin, "Chi è spaventato dal crollo del vecchio," in *Opere complete*, *op. cit.*, Vol. XXVI, p. 384.
104. Lenin, *Opere complete*, *op. cit.*, Vol. XLV, p. 485.
105. Lenin, "Stato e rivoluzione," in *Opere complete*, *op. cit.*, Vol. XXV, p. 445.
106. Lenin, "Chi è spaventato del crollo del vecchio," *op. cit.*, p. 384.
107. *Ibid.*, p. 384.
108. Lenin, "Compagni operai, alla lotta finale, decisiva!" in *Opere complete*, *op. cit.*, Vol. XXVIII, p. 53.
109. Lenin, "Tre fonti e tre parti integranti del marxismo," in *Opere complete*, *op. cit.*, Vol. XIX, p. 9.
110. Lenin, "Due tattiche della socialdemocrazia," in *Opere complete*, *op. cit.*, Vol. IX, p. 51.

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unleash "mass terror."[111] He also ordered the creation of a "separate world" — the concentration-camp universe[112] — in which to dump all the impurities that the "old and putrid global regime"[113] had left as a legacy to socialism. The stated objective was "to purify Russian society,"[114] i.e., to institute permanent terror. In a letter sent in 1922 to the commissar at the Kurski Tribunal, Lenin wrote: "To openly support a principle that is equitable on a political level (and not only in a strictly juridicial sense) motivating the essence and the justification of terror, its necessity and its limits, the tribunal must not eliminate terror; to promise this would mean to deceive oneself or deceive others; it has to be justified and legitimated on the level of principles, clearly and without falsity and embellishments. The formulation must be as broad as possible, since only revolutionary justice and revolutionary consciousness will decide the breadth of the conditions of its practical application."[115]

This is not unlike Hitler's idea of revolution. The point of departure of the man François Furet has called "Lenin's belated brother"[116] corresponds to the diagnosis of the world's corruption found in Marxist ideology. According to *Mein Kampf*: "To the extent that economic life grew to become the dominant mistress of the State, money became the God everyone had to serve and in front of whom every man had to bow. The Gods of Heaven were increasingly put into the corner as obsolete and outmoded, and in their stead incense was burned to the idol Mammon. A truly malignant degeneration set in."[117] Yet, for Hitler, the perverse beings to blame for the moral degradation generated by the undisputed "domination of money"[118] is not the bourgeoisie, but the Jews. They are the "vampires" at the "service of pure Mammon."[119] Thus, the regeneration of the world must necessarily be based on their annihilation. A few months before committing suicide, Hitler told his faithful followers: "I was honest with the Jews. On the eve of the war, I gave them a last warning. I told them that if the world

111. Lenin, *Opere complete*, *op. cit.*, Vol. XXXV, p. 243.
112. See Nicolas Werth, "Un Etat contre son peuple," in Stéphane Courtois, ed., *Le livre noir du Communisme* (Paris: Laffont, 1997). See also Orlando Figes, *La tragedia di un popolo* (Milan: Corbaccio, 1997).
113. Lenin, "III Congresso dei soviet," in *Opere complete*, *op. cit.*, Vol. XXVI, p. 459.
114. This claim is in Lenin's letter to Stalin in 1922, but only recently published. See Dimitri Volkogonov, *Le vrai Lénine* (Paris: Laffont, 1995), p. 213.
115. Lenin, *Opere complete*, *op. cit.*, Vol. XXXIII, p. 325.
116. François Furet, *Le passé d'une illusion* (Paris: Laffont, 1995), p. 243.
117. Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf* (London: Pimlico, 1992), p. 213.
118. *Ibid.*, p. 213.
119. *Ibid.*, p. 385.

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were again to be hurled into war, this time they would not be saved — and the parasites would have been finally exterminated in Europe."[120]

This Gnostic-Manichean vision of revolution as the purification of the world through the bloody annihilation of the masses responsible for general corruption, present both in communism and in National Socialism,[121] was completely extraneous to fascism. This is why, in its history, albeit full of violence and crimes, there is no trace of what Hannah Arendt considered to be the distinctive feature of totalitarianism: the concentration-camp universe based on the institutionalization of cathartic terror.[122] Ultimately, fascism wanted to be a "war machine" against modern civilization. Actually, it turned out to be only a superficial phenomenon because, from its very beginning, it lacked that regenerative drive to eradicate Evil, without which a truly totalitarian revolution is not even conceivable.[123] It was certainly not an innocuous phenomenon, since it left a substantial negative legacy to post-fascist Italy, including the fierce aversion to the bourgeoisie and liberalism, which contributed so much to spreading a Bolshevik culture not only among intellectuals, but also the working masses.

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120. Adolf Hitler, *Ultimi discorsi* (Padova: Edizioni Ar, 1988), p. 52.

121. See Luciano Pellicani, *La società dei giusti. Parabola storica dello gnosticismo rivoluzionario* (Milan: Etaslibri, 1995).

122. Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1966).

123. As Goebbels wrote in his *Diaries*, fascism "does not even remotely resemble National Socialism. Whereas the latter goes deep down to its roots, the former remains on the surface"; "the Duce is not revolutionary like the *Führer* or Stalin. He is so linked to the Italian people in that he lacks the essential qualities for a world revolutionary."

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Narratives and Culture: The Role of Stories in Self-Creation

Arran Gare

The postmodern condition is characterized not only by suspicion of meta-narratives, but by a depreciation of all narratives. Before WWII, Walter Benjamin noted that information was displacing stories.[1] Since then narratives have steadily lost status and, more recently, have even been attacked.[2] There is now a crisis of narrative in novels, while in film, narrative is being subordinated to images.[3] Literary theorists have reinforced this crisis by "deconstructing" discourses to undermine their cognitive claims.[4] More significantly, history has been in a crisis for some time,[5]

1. Walter Benjamin, "The Storyteller: Reflections on the Works of Nicolai Leskov," in *Illuminations*, ed. by Hannah Arendt, tr. by Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 1969), p. 87.

2. See Chistopher Nash, "Literature's Assault on Narrative," in *Narrative in Culture*, ed. by Chistopher Nash (New York: Routledge, 1990).

3. See Scott Lash, "Discourse or Figure? Postmodernism as a 'Regime of Signification'," in *Sociology of Postmodernism* (London: Routledge, 1990), pp. 172-198.

4. As Tzvetan Todorov characterized the views of the deconstuctionists, "The world itself is inaccessible; discourse alone exists, and discourse refers only to other discourse. . . . Even so, we are not to believe that discourse is better endowed than the world: the latter may not exist, but the former is necessarily incoherent. Deconstructionist commentary always consists in showing that the text studied is internally contradictory. . . . As no discourse is exempt from these contradictions, there is no reason to prefer one sort over another, or to prefer one value over another. In fact, in the deconstructionist perspective, any value-oriented behaviour (criticism, the struggle against injustice, hope for a better world) becomes subject to ridicule." *Literature and Its Theorists*, tr. by Catherine Porter (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987), p. 184.

5. See William H. Dray, ed., *Philosophical Analysis and History* (New York: New York University Press, 1966). See also the introduction to Hayden White, *Metahistory* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1973).

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with both historians and philosophers questioning the relation between narrative coherence and life as it is lived. These crises are associated with the decline within schools and universities of the significance of the humanities, particularly literature and history, which are most closely related to narrative forms.[6] According to Fredric Jameson,[7] the depreciation of narratives is a symptom of something fundamentally amiss in culture; it expresses the breakdown of the temporal organization of people's lives.

This general crisis has been accompanied by an extraordinary development of narratology — the systematic study of narratives.[8] Jerome Bruner argues that narrative stands alongside logic and science as a mode of organizing experience, knowing the world and constructing reality.[9] If so, what is the relation between these two modes of cognition? Is it possible to do without narratives? Or are narratives more primordial than logic, theoretical reasoning and scientific thought? In this case, it would be contradictory to *defend* theoretically the primacy of narratives, since this would presuppose that theoretical reasoning is the ultimate judge — precisely what is being questioned. An alternative is to construct a history of the notion of culture and then, through this narrative, to show the relative significance of narratives and theoretical reasoning within culture. The history of the *term* "culture" has already been traced.[10] What needs to be discussed, instead, is the *notion* of culture, which pre-existed the term and is associated with only one possible meaning. This means constructing a narrative going back to Greece.[11]

The first clear antecedent to the modern notion of culture emerged with the transformation of the concept of *nomos* a ssociated with the development of the notion of *physis* (nature). As Carl Schmitt has argued, *nomos* originally meant decision and order in earthbound locations related to land-appropriation, having a foundation in God and containing a concrete order and a community. With the development of the notion of rationally knowable *physis*, *nomos* was reconceived in opposition to it as the

6. See J. H. Plumb, ed., *Crisis in the Humanities* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1964).

7. Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991), p. 26f.

8. See Khachig Tololyan, "Telling the Event, Telling *as* Event: The Theory of Narrative," in *Choice* (July-August, 1990), pp. 1791-1799.

9. Jerome Bruner, *Actual Minds, Possible Worlds* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986). See also "The Narrative Construction of Reality," in *Critical Inquiry* 18 (Fall 1991), pp. 1-21.

10. See Raymond Williams, "Culture," in *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (London: Fontana, 1988), pp. 87-93.

11. For a broader account, see Arran Gare, *Nihilism Inc. Environmental Destruction and the Metaphysics of Sustainability* (Sydney: Eco-Logical Press, 1996).

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laws imposed by people or created by agreement, connoting custom, convention and arbitrariness.[12] An early articulation of this opposition, revealing how it led to an appreciation of the diversity of customs and conventions (and a tendency to denigrate such diversity), was Xenophanes' argument that some views vary from society to society, while others transcend any particular society.[13] Xenophanes was trying to defend a monotheistic theology where one God, "in no way similar to mortals either in body or thought," is discoverable through reason, and, correspondingly, disparaged Homer's epic poetry and Hesiod's "mythical" cosmogony. Parmenides, Xenophanes' student, further distinguished illusion from truth reached through reason. Parmenides argued that truth deals with what is, being, which alone is real. Change implies coming into being from not-being, and since not-being is not, there can be no becoming. Thus, the appearance of becoming must be an illusion. This argument was incorporated into Plato's philosophy, with poetry, drama and mythology being dismissed for dealing in illusions, emotions and becoming, in contrast to mathematics and philosophy, which have the eternal as their objects — mathematical objects and the forms — all deriving from one ultimate form: the Good.[14] Reinterpreted by Neoplatonists, Plato's thought was then synthesized with Hebraic thought,[15] with the Good being identified with the Hebraic God. Arguably, it was the Hebrews' primitive historical narratives that provided Christianity with its appeal,

12. Wolfgang Palaver, "Carl Schmitt on *Nomos* and Space," in *Telos* 106 (Winter 1996), pp. 105-127. See also G.L. Ulmen, "The Concept of *Nomos'* Introduction to Schmitt's 'Appropriation/Distribution/Production'," in *Telos* 95, (Spring 1993), pp. 39-52; and W.K.C. Guthrie, "The 'Nomos'-'Physis' Antithesis in Morals and Politics," in *The Sophists* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), pp. 55-134.

13. See G. S. Kirk, J. E. Raven and M. Schofield, *The Presocratic Philosophers*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), p. 169. According to Xenophanes: "The Ethiopians say that their gods are snub-nosed and black, the Thracians that theirs have light blue eyes and red hair. But if cattle and horses or lions had hands, or were able to draw with their hands and do the works that men can do, horses would draw the forms of gods like horses, and cattle like cattle, and they would make their bodies such as they each had themselves."

14. On this see Jaakko Hintikka, "Knowledge and its Object in Plato," in *Knowledge and the Known* (Dordrecht: Reidel, 1974).

15. As St. Augustine put it: "The education of the human race, represented by the people of God, has advanced, like that of an individual, through certain epochs, or, as it were, ages, so that it might gradually rise from earthly to heavenly things, and from the visible to the invisible." See St. Augustine, *The City of God*, tr. by Marcus Dodds (New York: Random House: 1950), Bk 10, Ch. 14. For the identification of the heavenly, invisible things with the eternal, see St. Augustine, *On Christian Doctrine*, Bk I, XXII, 20; tr. by D. W. Robertson (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1958), p.18.

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but such narratives were regarded as subordinate to the eternal.

Through history, people were educated to see the futility of the realm of change and to live for what is eternal. In Christian culture, which became the foundation of European civilization, the opposition between becoming (dealt with by myths) and the eternal (revealed through reason or revelation) held until the Renaissance. The 16th and 17th century revival of Pythagorean Neoplatonism by Kepler, Galileo, Descartes and Newton associated with the new mechanical philosophy — what has come to be seen as the birth of modern science — can be regarded as a reaffirmation of eternal knowledge in the face of growing interest in change. Descartes claimed to have come up with a new method for acquiring knowledge instead of tradition, dogma, faith, superstition and prejudice. Modeled on mathematical thinking, and analytical geometry in particular, this new method was combined with a rejection of dialectical thought as a means of reasoning from reputable opinions to conclusions, of the use of metaphor and other rhetorical devices, and of the claims of history and historical narratives to knowledge.[16] The rise of the new science was also associated with the quest for a perfect language that would accurately represent the world.[17] Retrospectively, this is equated with the move not only beyond myth, but also beyond philosophy, and the attainment of truly objective knowledge of the eternal laws of the motion of immutable matter.

Hobbes took Descartes' mechanical view of the world to its logical conclusion, representing people as complex machines in which all thinking is calculation in the service of control of the world to satisfy appetites and avoid aversions. Language is a means to extend the power of such thinking, to register the causes of things and to convey this knowledge to others. Science is the extension of such knowledge. Societies are mechanical aggregations of egoistic individuals who have entered into a contract to obey the covenants of society, and who, through their constrained egoism, keep the cogs of society turning. The only basis for ethics is enlightened egoism. Along with poetry and drama, narratives were given a place, "to please and delight our selves, and others, by playing with our words,

16. See René Descartes, "Rules for the Direction of the Mind," especially Rule Ten, in *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, tr. John Cottingham, Robert Stoothoff and Dugald Murdoch (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), Vol. 1, pp. 34-37. On the significance of this, see Stephen Toulmin, *Cosmopolis: The Hidden Agenda of Modernity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990).

17. See Mary Slaughter, *Universal Languages and Scientific Taxonomy in the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambirdge University Press, 1982).

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for pleasure and ornament, innocently."[18]

In the 18th and 19th centuries, this worldview became even more popular with the addition of a simulated narrative of development — economic progress generated by self interest and, more broadly, progress in nature and history through the generation of various organizations of matter and their selection through the struggle for survival. Today's reductionist science (which seeks to develop mathematical equations to account for everything in the universe), logical empiricism, neo-classical economics, socio-biology, and forms of cognitive psychology that model human thinking on computers, are merely the latest developments of this worldview. In this scheme of things, customs, conventions and traditions are of little significance unless they can be used to promote tourism or sell commodities. Narratives are even less important. They are nothing more than decorations surrounding factual statements about the past. Hobbes' philosophy reigns supreme.

This does not mean that narratives have not played an important role throughout the history of European civilization.[19] Aristophanes ridiculed Socrates while extolling drama. Unlike Plato, Aristotle respected narratives, but only as subordinate to philosophy. More importantly, various narratives in various forms have been crucial to all societies, and the history of European civilization is characterized by continuous innovation in both historical and fictional narrative. The term "narrative" originated in rhetoric and originally had no connection with storytelling. Its development into storytelling was a development in the form of narrative.[20] Even through rhetoric, narratives did not gain a status equal to discourses aiming at knowledge of the eternal. Narrative was first defended convincingly in the 17th century by Giambattista Vico (1668-1744), one of the leading opponents of mechanical philosophy, after the rise of this philosophy and its denigration of narrative knowledge.

Vico not only opposed the dismissal of metaphor and rhetoric, of history

18. Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* [1651] (Harmonsworth: Penguin Books, 1968), Part I, Ch. 4, p. 102.

19. R. G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1948) is still one of the best general histories of history. The rise of the novel from earlier forms of narrative have been described in Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*, tr. by Willard R. Trask (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968). For a shorter history from a different perspective, see Mikhail Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays by M. M. Bakhtin*, tr. by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist, ed. by Michael Holquist (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1981).

20. See C. Jan Swearington, "Narration of Dialogue and Narration Within Dialogue: The Transition from Story to Logic," in *Narrative Thought and Narrative Language* (Hillside, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1990), pp. 173-97.

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and imagination, but focused precisely on those aspects of reality dismissed by mainstream European culture — customs, conventions, traditions and stories. To the extent that he rejected the view of society as an atomistic collection of mechanical egoists and defended a view of individual minds as the product of historically developing societies, Vico was the founder of the science of culture.[21] In opposition to Descartes' science of nature and his concept of the mind as thinking substance, Vico claimed to have created a New Science of the socio-historical world, and argued for the superiority of historical knowledge. Man can only know what he has made, i.e., "from the inside" rather than the outside.[22] Mathematics is transparent not because it is part of a supersensible realm of being behind appearances, but because it is a human construction. For the same reason, artworks, political schemes, legal systems, history, purposes, etc. can also be known. Rejecting the view of language as a means to accurately represent reality, Vico considered it the key to social and cultural life. Ideas are inseparable from the symbols by which they are expressed. Mental processes can be inferred from words and the way they are used, for "genius is the product of language, not language of genius."[23] It is possible to enter the mentality of very different people through *fantasia* — imagination — which allows for more than one way to categorize reality. By contrast, it is only possible to describe nature, to predict how it will behave in different situations. It is not possible to know why it behaves as it does.

At the same time, Vico attacked Descartes' quest for perfect, timeless truths that could be expressed in universally intelligible symbols, at any time and under any circumstance. In its place he proposed a "genetic" approach to knowledge, arguing that the validity of all true knowledge, even that of mathematics and logic, can only be demonstrated by showing how it has been created, by retracing its genesis through historical narrative. Natural law and social contract theorists have gone astray in trying to demonstrate the ethical basis of law through abstract reasoning based on some eternal human nature. This human nature is a developing process, constantly generating new needs and categories. Modern law, along with justice, rights and obligations, is the outcome of a long history of cultural

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21. This is not to say that Vico had no antecedents. See Bruce Haddock, *An Introduction to Historical Thought* (London: Edward Arnold, 1980), Ch. 6.

22. *The New Science of Giambattista Vico* [3rd ed., 1744], tr. by Thomas Goddard Bergin and Max Harold Fisch (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984), § 331, p. 96.

23. Giambattista Vico, *On the Study Methods of Our Time* [1709], tr. by Elio Gianturco (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), p. 40.

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evolution, and the validity of these concepts (and of the ethical claims based on them) can only be determined through the study of their historical genesis. For Vico, notions such as "universal reason," the "social contract," or the "calculation of self-interest," are implausible myths.

More broadly, Vico began the schism between those primarily concerned with the specific and the unique, and those in the Cartesian tradition interested in the repetitive and the universal. This opposition is related to concern for the concrete rather than the abstract, with change rather than rest, with inner rather than outer reality, with quality rather than quantity, with what is culture-bound rather than timeless principles, with self-transformation rather than eternal peace, order and harmony. Vico did not reject Cartesian concerns entirely. He allowed them a legitimate, though subordinate place, to be justified historically.

Vico was virtually ignored until very similar ideas were developed independently by Herder (1744-1803) in Germany.[24] However, while Vico was concerned only with European history, Herder wrote on the history of humanity, and provided an alternative view of nature. To defend human diversity, Herder appropriated the term "culture," and used the plural to emphasize the differences between societies. In opposition to Hobbes, he argued that people are both formed by and participants in the creation of their particular cultures. To justify his rejection of the mechanistic view of humanity,[25] Herder also rejected the mechanistic view of nature, which he saw as a unity where dynamic, teleological forces, flow into each other, clash, combine and coalesce.

Life was still understood in reference to its physical environment, but at the same time it was seen as striving to actualize unique natures. The challenge for society is to discover its center of gravity and to actualize its potential. All aspects of a particular people, especially their language, were seen to express qualities unique to their cultures so that every aspect of a culture reflects the whole. In opposition to Enlightenment individualism, Herder argued that individuality is only achieved by participation in the particular culture through which one's humanity has been attained.[26]

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24. See Johann Gottfried Herder, *On World History*, ed. by Hans Adler and Ernest A. Menze, tr. by Ernest A. Menze (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1997). See also Isaiah Berlin, *Vico and Herder* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1976).

25. For Herder's views on nature, see Hugh Barr Nisbet, *Herder and the Philosophy and History of Science* (Cambridge: Modern Humanities Research Association, 1970).

26. To speak and think requires language: it is to "swim in an inherited stream of images and words; we must accept these media on trust: we cannot create them." Cited in Berlin, *Vico and Herder*, *op. cit.*, p. 168.

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All human activity was seen as expressing the total personality, with self-realization being the most harmonious form of self-expression, which is what all people live for, whether they are aware of it or not. This notion of humanity emphasized the creativity of people living in worlds they themselves had created. The most important members of society are its artists.[27] The reason for studying societies is not to control people but to appreciate their uniqueness, and at the same time to inspire them to realize their own unique potentials. Along with the mechanical worldview, the egoistic individualism of Enlightenment philosophers was seen merely as the culture of one defective society.[28]

These views inspired the comparative study of language, literature, folktales and myths, and the development of hermeneutics in 19th century Germany.[29] Herder also inspired the *Naturphilosophen* and Hegel, who rejected Kant's notion of the preformed ego, the "I" represented as a pure unity relating to itself, and portrayed it as something which developed through participation in social and cultural life. Early on he argued that the formative process of culture through which people transcend their immediate engagement in the world to become egos, consists in three interdependent dialectical patterns: symbolic representation, which operates through language; interaction on the basis of reciprocity of recognition, which operates through moral relations; and labor, which operates through tools.[30] The interweaving of these dialectical patterns,[31] neither reducible to nor

27. According to Herder, "A poet is a creator of a people; he gives it a world to contemplate. . . ." *Ibid.*, p. 203.

28. As Herder wrote in *Letters on the Advancement of Mankind* (1793-7): "Our part of the earth should be called not the wisest, but the most arrogant, aggressive, money-minded: what it has given [the rest of humankind] is not civilization but the destruction of the rudiments of their own cultures wherever they could achieve this." *Ibid.*, p. 160.

29. See Wilhelm Dilthey, "The Development of Hermeneutics," in *Dilthey: Selected Writings*, ed. and tr. by H.P. Rickman (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1976), pp. 247-263 and Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 2nd rev. ed., tr. and revised by Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall (New York: Continuum, 1993), Ch. 1.

30. G.W.F. Hegel, *System of Ethical Life and First Philosophy of Spirit* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1979), pp. 206-234 and *Hegel and the Human Spirit*, (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1983). See Jürgen Habermas, "Labor and Interaction: Remarks on Hegel's *Jena Philosophy of Mind*," in *Theory and Practice* [1971], tr. by John Viertel (London: Heinemann, 1974), pp. 142-169.

31. In Hegel's mature work, this division was subordinated to the division between Subjective, Objective and Absolute Spirit. Contrary to Habermas' claim, Hegel continued to give a central place to these struggles — particularly the struggle for recognition. See Robert R. Williams, *Hegel's Ethics of Recognition* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1997); and Axel Honneth, *The Struggle for Recognition: The Moral Grammar of Social Conflicts*, tr. by Joel Anderson (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1996).

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autonomous from each other, constitutes social dynamics. At the same time, Hegel used these historical narratives to legitimate the political institutions and cultural achievements of his own time, by showing how they provided the perspective from which past cultural developments could be understood and evaluated.

Each of these three dialectical patterns has been proposed as the basis of a ll c ultural d ynamics.[32] Structuralists (and some p ost-structuralists) have attempted to reduce cultural dynamics to the "dialectic or representation" (the operation of language and other systems of signs), Marxists have f ocused o n t he l abor p rocess, w hile symbolic in teractionists a nd neo-Marxists, following George Herbert Mead, have located the social dynamics in the struggle for recognition.[33]

Not all studies of culture have their roots in Hegel, or in Vico and Herder. The French tradition, from Montesquieu through Durkheim to Lévi-Strauss, and the Anglophone tradition, from the Scottish philosophers through Herbert Spencer, developed independently of German thought. There have been no developments in the study of culture, however, which cannot be seen as elaborating on one or another of the dialectical patterns identified by Hegel, or on some aspect of the relationship between these patterns. This does not mean that all aspects of life can be understood in terms of the weaving of these three patterns. Thus, Marx showed[34] how the economic categories that English economists claimed to be part of the natural order were actually part of a particular, historically transient, culture. But Marx also argued that, while based on culture, the market system had dynamics of its own, irreducible to cultural dynamics, and Georg Simmel generalized this insight to other domains.[35]

Simmel sought to examine the micro-forms which transcend dialectical processes, and others since then have identified the dynamics of a variety of such formations (from Robert Michel's "iron law of oligarchy" to Michel Foucault's "discursive formations" and Pierre Bourdieu's "cultural fields"). Conceiving of history as "innumerable different rivers of time" in which a diversity of processes and structures evolving over a range of durations act as supports and limits for each other, Fernand

32. Habermas, *Theory and Practice*, *op. cit.*, p. 157f.

33. See Hans Joas, *G. H. Mead: A Contemporary Re-Examination of His Thought*, tr. by Raymond Meyer (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1985).

34. See Karl Marx, "Introduction," in *Grundrisse*, tr. by Martin Nicolaus (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973), pp. 83-111. As Aleksandr Bogdanov has argued, the dialectic of labor is itself a cultural process. See K. M. Jensen, *Beyond Marx and Mach: Aleksandr Bogdanov's Philosophy of Living Experience* (Dordrecht: Reidel, 1978).

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Braudel provided the means to consider and analyze the relationships between such diverse formations.[36] None of these social theorists, however, do full justice to human complexity. Individuals are more than products of biological, cultural and socio-economic dynamics. The view that people are cultural beings implies that they only become individuals through socialization into these emergent forms. But at least in some cases, individuals become more than the conditions of their emergence dictate: they become self-determining. This is what has been emphasized by existentialists, from Kierkegaard to Merleau-Ponty.

This account is clearly at odds with the tradition originating with Xenophanes, in which "culture" is denigrated as illusion in opposition to truth — knowledge of God, the forms, or scientific laws. Until recently, there has been an opposition between the humanities, concerned with understanding, appropriating and reflecting on cultural heritage, in which people are seen as cultural beings, and the sciences, concerned with acquiring objective knowledge. This is an opposition between those committed to acknowledging people's uniqueness, and those committed to reductionist explanations enabling predictions and control. There is a yet more fundamental opposition between those who see the world as a creative process of becoming and those who seek timeless truths. In the past, efforts to defend a distinctive humanistic approach (such as Wilhelm Dilthey's defence of hermeneutics or Heinrich Rickert's and Ernst Cassirer's neo-Kantian defences of the autonomy of history and the "cultural sciences") have not been taken very

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35. "Whenever life progresses beyond the animal level of culture, an internal contradiction appears. . . . We speak of culture whenever life produces certain forms in which it expresses and realizes itself. . . . But although these forms arise out of the life process, because of their unique constellation they do not share the restless rhythm of life, its ascent and descent, its constant renewal, its incessant divisions and reunifications. . . . They acquire fixed identities, a logic and lawfulness of their own; this new rigidity inevitably places them at a distance from the spiritual dynamic which created them and which makes them independent. . . . This characteristic of cultural processes was first noted in economic change." See Georg Simmel, "The Conflict in Modern Culture," in Donald N. Levine, ed., *George Simmel on Individual and Social Forms* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971), pp. 375-393.

36. "Science, technology, political institutions, conceptual changes, civilizations (to fall back on that useful word) all have their own rhythms of life and growth, and the new history of conjunctures will only be complete when it has made up a whole orchestra of them all. . . . Some structures, because of their long life, become stable elements for an infinite number of generations: they get in the way of history, hinder its flow, and in hindering it shape it. Others wear themselves out more quickly. But all of them provide both support and hindrance." See Fernand Braudel in "History and the Social Sciences," in *On History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), pp. 25-54.

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seriously, because if the "scientific" approach were valid, then the humanities can only deal with illusions.[37]

Now, however, the natural sciences are undergoing a transformation. Herder's anti-mechanistic concept of nature is coming of age.[38] This revolution involves recognizing the priority of becoming over being, of the irreducibility of complexity, and that, as conscious subjects, people are part of the reality being investigated.[39] Where does this leave science's claim to be objective truth? Partly this was based on the commitment to prediction and to representing what Bergson and Whitehead called "creative becoming" as a sensory illusion which could be overcome by reason and mathematics, i.e., by grasping eternal reality behind changing appearances. What is the status of claims to knowledge which extol the limits to

37. See Dilthey, "The Construction of the Historical World in the Human Studies," in *Dilthey: Selected Writings*, *op. cit.*, pp. 170-207, Heinrich Rickert, *The Limits of Concept Formation in Natural Science: A Logical Introduction to the Historical Sciences*, tr. by Guy Oakes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986) and Ernst Cassirer, "The Philosophy of History," in *Symbol, Myth, and Culture: Essays and Lectures of Ernst Cassirer 1935-1945*, ed. by Donald Phillip Verene (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1979), pp. 121-141.

38. As Ilya Prigogine put it, this is "a period of scientific revolution — one in which the very position and meaning of the scientific approach are undergoing reappraisal — a period not unlike the birth of the scientific approach in ancient Greece or of its renaissance in the time of Galileo." See Ilya Prigogine, *From Being to Becoming: Time and Complexity in the Physical Sciences* (San Francisco, CA: Freeman, 1980), p. xiif.

39. See Ilya Prigogine and Isabelle Stengers, "The New Alliance," in *Scientia* 112 (1977), pp. 319-332. The original title of Prigogine and Stenger's book *Order Out of Chaos: Man's New Dialogue with Nature* (Toronto: Bantam Books, 1984) was *The New Alliance*, implying that natural sciences are now aligned with the humanities. Such developments have been taking place mainly in the physical sciences, giving rise to the odd situation described by David Bohm: ". . . just when physics is moving away from mechanism, biology and psychology are moving closer to it. If this trend continues it may well be that scientists will be regarding living and intelligent beings as mechanical, while they suppose that inanimate matter is too complex and subtle to fit into the limited categories of mechanism." See David Bohm, "Some Remarks on the Notion of Order," in *Towards a Theoretical Biology, 2 Sketches*, ed. by C. H. Waddington (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1969), p. 34. Inspired by Prigogine's work and fueled by developments in complexity theory, there has been an increasingly strong stream of anti-mechanistic, anti-reductionist thinking in biology and neuro-physiology. For an overview of the history of theories of evolution showing recent advances in anti-reductionist thinking, see David J. Depew and Bruce H. Weber, *Darwinism Evolving* (Cambridge MA: MIT. Press, 1996). Similarly, Gerald Edelman has argued for the reality of consciousness, and conceived this as not only an emergent phenomenon of the brain (as did Roger Sperry) but also of culture. See Gerald Edelman, *Bright Air, Brilliant Fire: On the Matter of the Mind* (Harmondsworth: Allen Lane, 1992). See also Brian Goodwin, *How the Leopard Changed its Spots: The Evolution of Complexity* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1994).

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prediction and stress the reality of creative becoming?

To begin with, logical positivism which made prediction and the eternal realm of logical truths central to its celebration of science and denigration of the humanities failed in its attempt to ground mathematics in logic, or to find a form of logic beyond questioning. Then, its characterization of science was shown to be a misrepresentation of how science actually operates. It became evident that, not only were logical positivists not able to ground knowledge, but that what scientists do is much more like what humanists do. Firstly, they situate themselves in an historically developing tradition.[40] Secondly, they function as members of a community in which a central problem is interpretative understanding of people with different perspectives on the world.[41] Thirdly, they try to understand the world.[42] Critics of logical positivism thus confirmed the Vicovian insights of Benedetto Croce, that scientific activity is itself an historical process, with each experiment, each observation, each publication and each reading of a publication being historical events which must be appreciated as such for science to be possible.[43] And the ultimate goal of inquiry is to understand particular historical events and to bring them to life in the present. These insights generated a major problem, which, once understood, could be resolved by appeal to the same Vicovian tradition. How can one choose between different ways of understanding the world? Here one runs into the traditional charge of those committed to discovering eternal truths against convention, customs and narratives, and against the humanities: the charge of relativism. This relativism can be avoided through narrative. Elaborating Vico's claim that rhetoric is prior to logic and mathematical abstractions, Alasdair MacIntyre has shown how the acceptance of radically new theories depends on the ability of their defenders to use their theories to construct narratives. Since major

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40. As Thomas Kuhn (following Michael Polanyi) famously argued in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962).

41. See Thomas S. Kuhn, "The Natural and the Human Sciences," in *The Interpretative Turn*, ed. by David R. Hiley, James F. Bohman, and Richard Shusterman (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991), pp. 17-24. See also Bruno Latour and Steve Woolgar, *Laboratory Life: The Construction of Scientific Facts* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986).

42. See Michael Polanyi, *The Study of Man* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), and Maurice Finocchiaro, "Scientific Discoveries as Growth of Understanding," in T. Nickles ed., *Scientific Discovery, Logic and Rationality* (Dordrecht: Reidel, 1980), pp. 235-255.

43. For a brief but excellent characterization of Croce's ideas, see Collingwood, *The Idea of History*, *op.cit.* pp. 190-204.

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advances in knowledge transcend old assumptions and create new ways of arguing by changing the standards of relevance and proof, they cannot be evaluated in terms of existing criteria. The superiority of new theories is in that they facilitate an understanding of the achievements and limitations of the theories transcended.[44]

This means that all those who claim to have discovered some absolute object of or foundation for knowledge, from Plato to Descartes and Bertrand Russell, had been able to explain and defend their claims only through precisely the narrative forms they denigrated.[45] What distinguishes a discipline as a genuine "science," a body of knowledge and a research program, is that it has historians producing narratives through which various claims are evaluated, problems defined, and members of the discipline conducting research. The new science developed by Prigogine and others is defensible because it has provided the basis for a new narrative that reveals both the achievements and limitations of the previous natural science, and, therefore, how the new science has advanced beyond it.[46] From the perspective of cultural studies, this narrative can explain why, unlike those who have attempted to model their disciplines on their understanding of the natural sciences, those who have rejected such methods have achieved penetrating insights.

While narratives have been studied sporadically since Aristotle, only recently have sustained efforts been made to comprehend what narratives are (although they were foreshadowed by literary theorists in Russia in the 1920s). Structuralist semiotics has been partly responsible for this, because examination of the way components of communication

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44. According to McIntyre: "Wherein lies the superiority of Galileo to his predecessors? The answer is that he, for the first time, enables the work of all his predecessors to be evaluated by a common set of standards. The contributions of Plato, Aristotle, the scholars at Merton College, Oxford and Padua, the work of Copernicus himself at last all fall into place. Or to put matters in another and equivalent way: the history of late medieval science can finally be cast into a coherent narrative. . . . What the scientific genius, such as Galileo, achieves in his transitions, then, is not only a new way of understanding nature, but also and inseparably a new way of understanding the old sciences' way of understanding. . . . It is from the stand-point of the new science that the continuities of narrative history are reestablished." See Alasdair MacIntyre, "Epistemological Crises, Dramatic Narrative and the Philosophy of Science," in *Monist* 60 (1977), pp. 459-60 and 467.

45. J. M. Bernstein has shown how Descartes' defence of the suspension of narrative and historical legitimation is legitimated narratively. See his *The Philosophy of the Novel: Lukács, Marxism and the Dialectics of Form* (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1984), pp. 157-79.

46. Prigogine and Stengers, *Order out of Chaos*, *op. cit.*, and Depew and Weber, *Darwinism Evolving*, *op. cit.*, each provide such narratives. See also Gerry Webster and Brian Goodwin, *Form and Transformation* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

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are organized demanded an examination of the way larger units are organized in discourses; and the most significant form of discourse is the narrative. In attending to narratives they also came to realize their ubiquity.[47] Yet, structuralists ultimately failed to characterize the nature of narratives in structuralist terms, and, more importantly, to explain their ubiquity or to reveal their importance.[48] They did, however, provide a point of departure for others, such as Paul Ricoeur. As Mario Valdés has noted, the corner-stone of Ricoeur's theory of interpretation "is the return to the world of action as the basis for all meaning . . . which gives literary criticism a contemporary philosophical argument in the tradition of Giambattista Vico, Wilhelm von Humboldt, and Benedetto Croce."[49] Ricoeur argues that narrative is the fundamental structure of the experience of time.[50] Its ultimate referent is lived time. At the same time, narrative is central to creativity. Innovations are made by inventing plots by means of which "goals, causes, and chance are brought together within the temporal unity of whole and complete action."[51] A complete action

47. According to Roland Barthes: "The narratives of the world are numberless. Narrative is first and foremost a prodigious variety of genres, themselves distributed amongst different substances — as though any material were fit to receive man's stories. . . . [N]arrative is present in myth, legend, fable, tale, novella, epic, history, tragedy, drama, comedy, mime, painting . . . stained glass windows, cinema, comics, news item, conversation. . . . [N]arrative is international, transhistorical, transcultural: it is simply there, like life itself." See Roland Barthes, "Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narratives," in *Image, Music, Text* (London: Fontana Press, 1977), pp. 79-124.

48. This does not mean that the work on narrative by Lévi-Strauss, Barthes, Greimas, Todorov and Genette has not been important, but only that it leaves out what is most important about narrative. See Art Berman, *From the New Criticism to Deconstruction* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1988), pp. 122-132. The structuralists' shortcomings had already been identified in the Russian formalists by M. M. Bakhtin and P. N. Medvedev in *The Formal Method in Literary Scholarship* [1928], tr. by Albert J. Wehrle (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985), Ch. 6.

49. In Mario Valdés, ed., "Introduction: Paul Ricoeur's Post-Structuralist Hermeneutics," in *A Ricoeur Reader: Reflection and Imagination* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), p. 9.

50. Ricoeur's theory of narrative encompasses almost all the insights of other theorists (with the possible exceptions of Bakhtin and Carr). For Ricoeur's response to structuralism, see "What is a Text? Explanation and Understanding," in *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences*, ed. and tr. by John B. Thompson (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1981). For a further development of this specifically in relation to narratology see his critique of and debate with Greimas, see "Greimas's Narrative Grammer" and "On Narrativity: Debate with A. J. Greimas" in *A Ricoeur Reader*, *op.cit.*, pp. 256-286 and pp. 287-299. Ricoeur's response to structuralism parallels and accords with the response to formalism by Bakhtin and his circle.

51. Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, 3 Vols. [1983-84] (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984-85), Vol. I, p. ix.

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can consist of a number of other actions.[52]

According to Ricoeur there are three moments of mimesis in narrative — prefiguration, configuration and refiguration.[53] First, life is prefigured as an inchoate narrative. This is why there is a pre-understanding of what human action is, its semantics, its symbolism, its temporality. The second moment of mimesis involves the representation of action according to specific rules of emplotment, i.e., the making of a structure to configure this pre-understanding. Emplotment generates a quasi-world of action and characters. The third moment is the reception and actualization of that structure. People are drawn into the quasi-world, distancing them from their own life-worlds, challenging their taken-for-granted horizons of expectations to refigure their worlds.[54] They are provided with room to maneuver, to think about the way they construe the way they live, which allows them to refigure their lives by appropriating new structures.[55] The clearest example of the relation between these three moments in narrative occurred in Russia in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, as novelists based their characters and stories on real people, and individuals openly modelled their lives on fictional characters and their stories.[56] Ricoeur's work on narratives, especially following his accommodation of Carr's arguments that individual and social actions are lived narratives, provides a basis for combatting the influence of the structuralists and deconstructionists in literary theory. It justifies an approach to literature that situates historically, culturally and materially both literary products and the cultural fields which make literary production and reception possible. More

52. It can be the action of an individual — from some particular achievement to having lived a whole life, or of a group, such as winning a war, founding a nation or establishing or destroying a civilization. For an account of how actions are integrated into broader actions, both of individuals and groups, and how they relate to narratives, see David Carr, *Time, Narrative, and History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991).

53. Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, *op. cit.*, Ch. 3. Mimesis as "imitation" is accorded a more creative function in Ricoeur's philosophy.

54. Derived from Husserl and Gadamer, the notion of "horizon of expectations" is developed by Hans Jauss in "Literary History as a Challenge to Literary Theory," in *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception*, tr. by Timothy Bahi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982).

55. See Ross Chambers, *Room for Maneuver* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991). While Ricoeur was concerned with refiguring people's worlds, he dealt with the refiguring of their lives only when challenged by David Carr. Carr is more forceful on the relation between narratives and action. See the debate between Ricoeur and Carr (which led Ricoeur to modify his views) in David Wood ed., *On Paul Ricoeur: Narrative and Interpretation* (London: Routledge, 1991).

56. See Katerina Clark, *The Soviet Novel: History as Ritual* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1981), Ch. 2, and Gare, *Nihilism Inc.*, *op. cit.*, Ch. 10.

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importantly, it provides the basis for revealing and analyzing the relation between literature and life.[57]

Producing and telling stories is obviously a major component of the dialectic of representation, since life is already organized by narratives and people are already living their lives as inchoate narratives. As Vico pointed out, the human world can be understood better because it is a human creation. Thus, historical narratives are a major component of the dialectic of representation. More importantly, in light of the failure of efforts to solve epistemological problems through logic, and the recognition of the role of narrative in rationality, narratives must be regarded as the matrix within which all other forms of representation must be legitimated.[58]

Hegel and his followers emphasized that the dialectic of recognition and the medium of moral relations through which it operates are conditioned by the dialectic of representation. Following Emile Benveniste, Jacques Lacan has even claimed that the dialectic of representation is so basic to the formation of identity that it can be virtually reduced to it. For Lacan the subject is strung along by the unfolding of the signifying chain.[59] It is through names, pronouns and labels that individuals are constituted as subjects and moral agents. Yet, the relation between the dialectics of representation and recognition is much more complex than Lacan allowed.[60] One is not situated in

57. While Ricoeur's response to structuralism is well known, he also addressed the challenge of poststructuralism. For Ricoeur's response to Derrida, see Leonard Lawlor, *Imagination and Chance: The Difference Between the Thought of Ricoeur and Derrida* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1992). This book contains a discussion between Derrida and Ricoeur in which Ricoeur challenges Derrida for remaining at the level of the semiology of signs, ignoring the semantics of discourse. Defending Derrida, Lawler nevertheless reveals the difference between Derrida and his "deconstructionist" followers. This difference has been pointed out in more detail by Rodophe Gasché in *Inventions of Difference: On Jacques Derrida* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994).

58. See Walter R. Fisher, *Human Communication as Narration: Toward a Philosophy of Reason, Value, and Action* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1989).

59. In *Écrits* (London: Routledge, 1989), p. 316, Lacan claims that "A signifier is that which represents the subject for another signifier."

60. See Honneth, *The Struggle for Recognition*, *op. cit.* According to MacIntyre: "I can only answer the question 'What am I to do?' if I can answer the prior question 'Of what story or stories do I find myself a part?' We enter human society, that is, with one or more imputed characters — roles into which we have been drafted — and we have to learn what they are in order to be able to understand how others respond to us and how our responses to them are apt to be construed. It is through hearing stories . . . that children learn or mislearn both what a child and what a parent is, what the cast of characters may be in the drama into which they have been born and what the ways of the world are. Deprive children of stories and you leave them unscripted, anxious stutterers in their actions and in their words." See Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue* (Notre Dame, IN: Notre Dame University Press, 1984), 2nd ed., p. 216.

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social space as a moral agent simply through individual words, but through narratives. Social groups through which individuals are recognized and granted identity, from friendships to nations, are constituted by narratives.

Finally, while the dialectic of labor is often taken to be not only independent of the other two patterns and sometimes as the sole basis of social dynamism, the kind of co-operation required for the use, let alone further development of all but the most elementary tools, would be impossible without the structuring of social relations through the dialectics of representation and recognition embodying narratives. Complex projects of joint action, involving the integration of a number of subordinate actions, take the form of a narrative and must be narrated by actors to coordinate their actions with each other. This precedes its recounting by the actors or by others to a broader public.

What is the relation between narratives and emergent forms that have taken on a life of their own? They are in constant tension. In taking on a life of their own, social forms transform the conditions of their emergence, by "dehumanizing" them into instruments of their own functioning. People participating in such forms might still define their participation in terms of narratives, but these will not be integrated into a narrative defining the goal of the formation, and are likely to be in irreconcilable conflict with the narratives of others. Thus, as organizations become bureaucratized, the narratives on which they are based tend to disintegrate, their goals lose definition, and careerists indifferent to these goals, interested only in their own personal advancement and power struggles, not only penetrate such institutions, but displace those who take the original goals seriously. People claiming to be "social scientists," who model their approach on the misrepresentation of an outmoded form of natural science (such as mainstream economists and reductionist psychologists) are instruments of such forms — and usually careerists. They stand in opposition to those s truggling to r eformulate narratives which will subordinate such forms to human ends — or at least enable people to free themselves from domination by these forms.

This drama is illustrated by the responses to the autonomous dynamics of capitalism. Modeling their discipline on physics, in the 19th century economists such as Malthus came to regard the economy as an end in itself, and people as relevant only if they were useful to the economy.[61]

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61. See Andrew S. Skinner, *A System of Social Science: Papers Relating to Adam Smith* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1979).

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Marx, on the other hand, produced a narrative which cast an economic system functioning according to dynamics transcending people's intentions as an aberration. In the 20th century, John Maynard Keynes provided an alternative narrative according to which the market need not be abolished, but could be reduced to an instrument for human ends. This does not mean that Marx and Keynes did not use abstract forms of reasoning (or, for that matter, engage in empirical research). They did not commit however, what Whitehead called "the fallacy of misplaced concreteness" by taking these abstractions for reality.[62] Their abstractions were ultimately subordinated to narratives that provided the possibility of taking responsibility for the future, for regaining control of social dynamics in the interests of human welfare.[63]

What is the relation between narratives and individuals? It is essentially through narratives that individuals become more than the conditions of their existence. Individuals who utilize the inherent reflexivity of the narrative form to question the stories they have been socialized into, to consider alternative versions of these stories, to refigure their lives in accordance with their chosen versions of the stories of which they are a part, who thereby take responsibility for their lives, are the creative agents of culture, society and history.[64] Such people are the "authentic" authors of their own becoming.[65] The kinds of narrative that can be developed depends on social conditions. As Lucien Goldmann noted, the first phase of capitalism had a place for a stratum of individuals who could play "an

62. See Alfred North Whitehead, *Science and the Modern World* [1925] (New York: Mentor, 1948), p. 52. Whitehead himself criticized this tendency in economics. (*Ibid.*, p. 179).

63. Neo-classical economists embracing a positivist philosophy of science and infatuated by mathematics and computer models are again construing humans as cogs of the economic machine, this time, of the global economic machine, debasing people to "human resources." See Philip Mirowski, "Shall I Compare Thee to a Minkowski-Ricardo-Leontief-Metzler Matrix of the Hicks-Mosak Kind?" in *Economics and Philosophy* 3 (1987), pp. 67-96. See also his *Against Mechanism: Protecting Economics from Science* (Totowa, NJ: Rowman and Littlefield, 1988); and *More Heat Than Light: Economics as Social Physics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989). Narratives that reconstruct the narratives of traditions and expose how they are being corrupted in the new order, such as Bill Reading's *The University in Ruins* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996), are the first step in fighting such debasement.

64. See Paul Ricoeur, *Oneself as Another*, tr. by Kathleen Blamey (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992). See also Katherine Nelson, ed., *Narratives from the Crib* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989). Habermas has identified the ability to organize one's own life as a biography as the highest stage of moral development. See "Moral Development and Ego Identity," in *Communication and the Evolution of Society* [1976] (Boston: Beacon Press, 1991), p. 87.

65. Carr, *Time, Narrative, and History*, *op. cit.*, pp. 86-94.

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active and responsible role in economic, social and political life, and therefore in cultural life."[66] *Bildungsroman* — a narrative of self-development and self-education — developed within this environment.[67] As social reality became increasingly irrational, Franz Kafka and the existentialist revealed the *angst* of attempts to give narrative coherence to one's life in a world dominated by incomprehensible social forms and mindless functionaries. To construct historical or fictional narratives about this is to rebel against such incoherence.[68] People struggling for both coherence and adequacy to the world through narratives oppose decadence, the decay of the narratives being lived out, and the domination of emergent social forms inimical to creativity and dignity. They regenerate institutions and societies by reformulating and reviving old, or creating new narrative forms.

Conclusion

This presentation has been an emplotment — a unification of a diversity of events, ideas and developments into one action. This action consists of a number of other constituent actions:

First, Greek philosophy, defining "culture" negatively as the changing ephemeral aspects of society, thought and beliefs in opposition to knowledge of what is eternal, and its consolidation with the development of modern science;

Second, Vico's inversion which made "culture" the privileged object of inquiry and saw science as part of culture;

Third, Herder's "naming" of culture and the development of the notion of diverse "cultures," along with the suggestion that it is the understanding of nature which needs to be brought into line with this notion of people as cultured, creative beings;

Fourth, the elaboration of Herder's ideas by Fichte, Schelling and Hegel, with Hegel postulating three dimensions of culture, and the subsequent development of the humanities, further elaborating the concept of culture — although without succeeding in displacing the mechanistic

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66. Lucien Goldmann, *Sociology of the Novel*, tr. by Alan Sheridan (New York: Tavistock, 1975), p. 169.

67. See Franco Moretti, *The Way of the World: The* Bildungsroman *in European Culture* (London: Verso, 1987).

68. In a world that has rendered people totally powerless within a global market, "postmodern" narratives such as Brett Easton Ellis' *American Psycho* (New York: Vintage, 1991), have attempted to portray life where there is not only no coherence in the social order, but all attempts by individuals to achieve narrative coherence in their own lives have been abandoned.

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view of humans promulgated by the "hard" sciences;

Fifth, the breakdown within science of the project of gaining knowledge of eternal reality and the development of a concept of nature as a process of creative becoming justifying the view of people developed in the humanities, along with the resolution of epistemological problems in the natural sciences by recourse to narrative;

Sixth, the development of narratology which is now further enriching the understanding of all dimensions of culture, individuality, and of what it means to be human.

The presentation of this narrative has also been an evaluation of the recounted events, suggesting that, since it assumes there is only one truth, a culture which celebrates the eternal will tend to be aggressive, intolerant, do mineering and o ppressive t owards o ther c ultures. M ore s ignificantly, this celebration is wrong. To the extent they are successful, narratives not only compel agreement with the value judgments being made, but they address how people live.

At this stage of history, one of the most important tasks is to defend the narrative. This is being undertaken not only by literary critics, but also by psychologists such as Donald Polkinghorne and Jerome Bruner, philosophers such as Ricoeur, MacIntyre and Carr, and literary theorists such as Ross Chambers and Gary Saul Morson.[69] Rather than reducing people to objects, narratologists tackle social problems by studying the narratives dominating people's lives, and showing how they can become authentic agents by reflecting on their narratives, gaining access to new ones and by participating in the creation of their own.

What is more important, and more problematic, is the crisis of narrative in art and life associated with the postmodern condition that has engendered such concern about the nature of narrative. This crisis is at least partly the consequence of the success of logical and reductionist scientific forms of thinking with their quest for the eternal, their orientation

69. See Donald E. Polkinghorne, *Narrative Knowing and the Human Sciences* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1988), Chambers, *Room for Maneuver*, *op.cit.* and Gary Saul Morson, *Narrative and Freedom* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994). See also Thomas R. Flynn and Dalia Judovitz, eds., *Dialectic and Narrative* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1993); Bill Martin, "Analytic Philosophy's Narrative Turn: Quine, Rorty, Davidson," in *Literary Theory After Davidson*, ed. by Reed Way Dasenbrook (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1993), Wolfgang Eiser, *The Fictive and the Imaginary: Charting Literary Anthropology* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1993) and Hans Robert Jauss, *Question and Answer: Forms of Dialogic Understanding*, ed. and tr. by Michael Hays (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989).

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to control and their denial of human freedom. However, the more fundamental problem is that people have been so disempowered by the autonomous dynamics of social forms (pre-eminently, the global economy) that they have given up the effort to live authentically. The loss of interest in narrative is typical of societies in which people believe they have no power to shape their lives.[70] It is for this reason that narratives, especially grand narratives of progress, have lost their meaning.[71] With the subsequent fragmentation of experience, art, literature and history have been reduced to mere forms of entertainment or amusement. The crisis of narrative is a crisis of the imagination[72] — a failure of people to even attempt to overcome their debasement and powerlessness. What is most called for in the present age is storyspinners, that is, historians, writers and artists who can give people back their future

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70. On this, see Donald E. Brown, *Hierarchy, History and Human Nature: The Social Origins of Historical Consciousness* (Tucson, AZ: University of Arizona Press, 1988).

71. On this, see Arran Gare, *Postmodernism and the Environmental Crisis* (London: Routledge, 1995), Ch.1.

72. On the connection between postmodernity and the failure of imagination, see Richard Kearney, "Postmodern Culture: Apocalypse Now?" in *The Wake of Imagination* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), Ch. 8; and "Paul Ricoeur and the Hermeneutic Imagination," in *The Narrative Path: The Later Works of Paul Ricoeur* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1989), pp. 1-31.

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Notes and Commentary:

Gianfranco Miglio (1918-2001)

Carlo Lottieri

Within 20th century European political science, Gianfranco Miglio was a leading figure, whose theoretical contribution has yet to be fully appreciated. Educated at the Università Cattolica of Milan, where he studied with Giorgio Balladore Pallieri and Alessandro Passerin D'Entrèves,[1] he was a scholar with very broad interests and inexhaustible curiosity. For many years Dean of the Faculty of Political Science at Università Cattolica (1959-1989), Miglio was a leading exponent of that tradition of political science dating back to Gaetano Mosca and Vilfredo Pareto, or, more generally, of that political realism which, from Max Weber to Carl Schmitt, has attempted to analyze institutions and society in order to demystify power and to examine it without any ideological embellishments. Brought up within a positivist culture faithful to the principles of Weber's *Wertfreiheit*, Miglio always sought to imbue his theoretical vocation with that strong historical sensibility that not only led him to emphasize the *historicity* of the state,[2] but also to pay careful attention to all those cultural realities and modern institutions that cannot be connected to the predominant model of the state.

Miglio intellectual production is vast, which makes it s difficult to summarize. It goes from political theory to the history of ideas, from constitutional law to the history of institutions. He was aware of the complexity of the problems he confronted, and knew well that only an interdisciplinary approach (methodologically eclectic and free of any assumed certainties: in a word, *heretical*) could open new paths. Precisely because of this, today his originality can be gauged through the variety of essays that his students collected in two volumes on the occasion of his 70th birthday.[3] In this sense, Miglio's intellectual trajectory is

1. See Alessandro Passerin D'Entrèves, *Natural Law: An Introduction to Legal Philosophy* (London: Hutchinson University Press, 1951); and *Dante as Political Thinker* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952).

2. Miglio often used the expression "(modern) State" to indicate that the state is always modern, and that therefore such a concept cannot be transposed to other contexts.

3. Gianfranco Miglio, *Le Regolarità della Politica* (Milan: Giuffrè, 1988).

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characterized by his habit of constantly reconsidering every claim, in an effort to come ever closer to an effective understanding of those *arcana imperii* that were always at the center of his reflection. Yet, despite the multiplicity of themes he dealt with, the constant focus of his life-work was the problem of power: the fascination it exercises, the fear it generates, the force it unleashes.

Miglio's name is associated primarily with the "Carl Schmitt Renaissance" that dominated Italian political thought during the 1970s. During those years, he realized the need to take up the intellectual challenge posed by the author of *The Concept of the Political*, by emphasizing its burning relevance.[4] He not only encouraged the translation of some of Schmitt's major works, but went on to emphasize the hypocrisy and bankruptcy of the parliamentarianism he had already denounced in the famous lecture he delivered in 1964 at Università Cattolica.

In a "neo-tribal" Italy dominated by parties and by the parcelling out of roles (*lottizzazione*), Miglio emphasized the need to restore power and authority in politics. He launched a project meant to relegitimate political decisions and, at the same time, to establish new powers with new responsibilities.[5] He assembled some of the main Italian constitutional scholars and formed what became known as the "Milan Group": a brain-trust meant to elaborate a project — at that time revolutionary — of a presidential republic.[6]

Although regarded as a "conservative," during these years Miglio generated considerable interest even among Marxist thinkers.[7] His analyses which, following Schmitt, traced the decline of the democratic-parliamentary model, could be used even by scholars belonging to very different traditions. Ironically, some of Miglio's ideas matured precisely when the research centers he founded and directed (primarily in order to reform public administration)[8] closed down for lack of financing. In some way, the encounter with Schmitt coincided with the fading

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4. See Carl Schmitt, *Le Categorie del "Politico" — Saggi di Teoria Politica*, ed. by Gianfranco Miglio and Pierangelo Schiera (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1972).

5. For Miglio, post-WWII Italy, with a semi-collectivist economy, governments lasting less than a year, and a party system able to parcel out a great number of positions of power, beginning with the leadership of large state enterprises, was a society characterized by complete irresponsibility. Presidentialism seemed to be a way to restore visibility and authority to power, with the objective of placing it in a position to meet society's needs.

6. Gruppo di Milano, *Verso una Nuova Costituzione*, a project directed by Gianfranco Miglio in collaboration with Giovanni Bognetti, Sergio Galeotti, Giorgio Petroni and Franco Pizzeti (Milan: Giuffrè, 1983). The critique of parliamentarianism is a constant feature in the Italian elitist tradition. See Gaetano Mosca, *Sulla Teoria dei Governi e sul Governo Parlamentare* (Turin: Utet, 1982), originally published in 1884.

7. See *La Politica oltre lo Stato: Carl Schmitt*, ed. by Giuseppe Duso (Venice: Arsenale, 1981).

8. Both the ISAP (Italian Institute for the Science of Public Administration) and FISA (Italian Foundation for the History of Public Administration) have been very important for political and juridical culture in Italy, and have produced some of the most original and innovative studies in the field.

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of all "technocratic" dreams. At that point, Miglio's intellectual trajectory took new directions. During the 1990s, many were surprised by the positions developed by the now old professor. Having imported "realistic decisionism" south of the Alps, and after having spent much time in attempting to persuade the Italian political class of the need to adopt a presidential political model (not an "authoritarian" one, but one with enough power to be able to guarantee stability and continuity), the later Miglio scandalized those who had a very different image of him.

Now Provost of Catholic University, Miglio proposed federalist reforms, became a supporter of the right of secession, subsequently played a personal political role by inspiring Lega Nord (which he came to represent as senator) and, following the break with that movement, sought to suggest ideas for a Center-Right coalition. In addition, Miglio stood out also because of his proposals of other radical cultural initiatives.[9] At the time, he reintroduced Henry David Thoreau's classic text concerning civil disobedience and encouraged the translation of the main works of Daniel J. Elazar (a major exponent of "the new federalism") and of Allen Buchanan's work concerning the right of secession.[10] In all this, however, there is a close connection between the original decisionism and the federalist outcome (colored with shades of libertarianism).

During the second half of the 20th century, Miglio had few rivals in his attempt to unpack (*scandagliare*) with scientific rigor the reality of power and to describe politics as it really is. It is precisely this disenchanted analysis of the mechanisms of political domination that led him close to that tradition which, from Etienne de la Boétie to Murray N. Rothbard, passing through 19th century American libertarians and early 20th century Italian elitists, has attempted to demystify political authority.

Behind the 1990s turn, however, there is not just a strengthened "realistic" attitude. As Miglio often emphasized, even during admirable parliamentary interventions, his rejection of decisionism came about as a result of a growing

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9. Actually, Miglio supported a federal solution even earlier, and it was only because of the opposition of other constitutional scholars that he put these proposals aside. Years later, he recalled these events as follows: "during the early day of the 'Milan Group,' I posed a loaded question concerning the two models, i.e., those of a federal and of a unitary state. Soon, however, I found myself in the minority. I remained isolated even in posing the question: none of my colleagues wanted to challenge the existing unitary structure of the Italian state." See Gianfranco Miglio, *Una Costituzione per i Prossimi Trent'Anni. Intervista sulla Terza Republica*, ed. by Marcello Staglieno (Bari: Laterza, 1990), p. 140

10. He even wrote the preface to a *Manual of Fiscal Resistance*, published by "The provisional Government of Padania," disparaging not only Italian laws, but also the illiberal legalism that for at least a couple of centuries characterized the political culture of continental Europe. In this brief, introductory text, Miglio writes: "Today's parliamentary majorities have attained, in the context of a fiscal subjugation of citizens, results that the absolute princes of bygone times could not even dream about. Those who do not belong to privileged and protected groups are nowadays mere subjects." See Gianfranco Miglio, "Preface" to *Manuale di Resistenza Fiscale* (Gallarate: Governo Provvisorio della Padania, 1996), p. 4.

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awareness that the modern state is obsolete: it is a tool that needs to be thrown away or, if one prefers, an institution to be radically reconsidered, since in its present form it can no longer meet contemporary challenges.

This evolution in Miglio's thought can be traced back to his work during the mid-1970s,[11] in an Italy where the electoral growth of the Communist Party was paralleled by an acceptance of the welfare state and of social-democratic policies. Within such a historical context, Miglio developed an analysis predicated on the two distinct poles of public life: the state and the market. Despite their opposition, as human elaborations these two poles, exhibit common traits. Following Mosca's and Pareto's work, he pointed out how "the iron laws of cooptation and conspiracy" operate both in the state and in the market. Weber's pretense of an impersonally neutral state now seemed naive and unfounded. Similarly, Miglio did not accept the then popular claims of those who sought to legitimate the capitalist order along "meritocratic" lines, or by hypothesizing equal starting points.

At any rate, the contraposition of state and market refers back to an "irreducible dualism" in terms of which the political apparatus and the entrepreneurial class have access to substantial financial resources, thanks to "two different *conventions*: respectively, 'public law' (the constitution) and 'private law' (the legal code)."[12] If state order is a result of the hierarchical rule of the political class' constructive will, Miglio recognized in the naturally liberal character of mercantile relations the expression of an ancient entrepreneurial dynamism that, already on the juridical level, in the Middle Ages of the *lex mercatoria*, had been able to express an "internationally uniform commercial law and a surprising continuity of historical development."[13] Thus, the spontaneous elaboration of a law that ignores national borders and extends freely in time was contraposed to the rigid obligations imposed by power.

Behind the eternal oscillations between state and market, Miglio identified two distinct obligations. Accordingly, "the contractual obligation predominates" in the market as the result of a law that emerges out of the actors' will, while within the state the scene is dominated by "political obligation," which exists by virtue of a one-sided claim to obedience: "among men *two different types* of relations, contemporaneous but *irreducible*, are possible: the inter-individual contract-obligation (in which particular, actual and determinate needs are satisfied through the market), and the pact of political loyalty (meant to guarantee the satisfaction of all future global, but also specific existential needs, which generate 'political rent')."[14]

On the basis of these analyses, Miglio elaborated an original interpretation of that syndicalist dissolution of state sovereignty typical of Italy in the 1970s. What

11. Cf. Gianfranco Miglio, "Le Transformazioni dell'Attuale Sistema Economico," (1976), now in *Le Regolarità della Politica*, Vol. II, *op. cit.*, pp. 609-646.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 619.
13. Levin Goldschmidt, *Universalgeschichte des Handelsrechts* (Stuttgart: Enke, 1891).
14. Miglio, "La Trasformazione dell'Attuale Sistema Economico," *op. cit.*, p. 620.

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he saw emerging was an arrangement he called "corporatist-federalist," in which "sanctions for broken pacts, and the discrimination between illicit (parasitic) and legitimate (sacrosanct) interests are no longer determined — at least for a while — by one conventional and decisive (sovereign) power, but depend on the general equilibrium of the obligations assumed by the given corporatist groups, and therefore on the material contractual force of each of them."[15]

Already at that time, one can find in Miglio's work a whole series of extraordinary intuitions concerning relations between these two fundamental models of social relations and of the struggle for resources. His subsequent reflections concerning state parasitism and of the role played by distribution of the "booty" within the political system began then, along with the emphasis on the centrality of the contract. Through these analyses, Miglio became interested in federalism (a theme he had actually begun to think about ever since he participated in the partisan struggle against the fascist regime) and in the market, understood not only as an economic system, but also as the premise for competing juridical orders. This is also the source of his re-elaboration of many previous studies concerning *eccentric* modern institutions, irreducible to the predominant state model which became increasingly centralized, national, Jacobin and impersonal. Like Althussius, who paid close attention to the original Dutch experiment, so close to his small city of Emden, Miglio also paid the same attention to the Helvetic federation from his birthplace, Como (situated at the border between Italy and Switzerland).

One of the things that led Miglio away from his original positions was the realization that the development of the atomic bomb and the subsequent *end of global wars* (an unchecked clash between the Great Powers would have implied the disappearance of the contenders): "the advent of a contractual system is, at this point, an ethical necessity."[16] Unable to carry out its primary task (war), the modern state appeared even more irrelevant in overseeing production and well-being. Starting out from these considerations, Miglio focused his analyses on the re-emergence of the primacy of the market and its logic: "Thus, in order to understand the changes taking place at the end of the century, it is necessary to understand the attraction to contract, pluralism and federalism that arises from the impossibility to manage in any other way the needs of the constituency. In fact, these needs are so diverse that they can be satisfied only in the free market."[17]

Thus, Miglio began to tie his ruthlessly realistic analyses of the state systems of domination ever more closely to his appreciation for the efficacy and civility of *polycentric* (federal) institutional orders, and the dynamism of market economies, competition, and innovation. If the decision to include in the prestigious book series "Arcana Imperii" that he directed an anthology of writings of von Mises

15. *Ibid.*, p. 638.

16. Gianfranco Miglio and Augusto Barbera, *Federalismo e Secessione: Un Dialogo* (Milan: Mondadori, 1997), p. 30.

17. *Ibid.*, p. 31.

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and Hayek (edited by Guido Vistuti under the title *The Political Realism of Ludwig von Mises and Friedrich von Hayek*) may have seemed odd at the time, today it is easier to understand in terms of the subsequent evolution of Miglio's thought.

Even when dealing with the inglorious destiny of the state order and celebrating the contractual logic of federalism and of the market, he constantly exercised his own sober demystifying spirit: "I am not designing a utopia, or wishing for a betterment (who could show this to be the case?) of late 20th century economic and political systems. I only seek objectively to describe the kind of institutional arrangements that are gradually being established. I stick to facts and only facts." These facts seem to suggest the actuality of "the great model of universal federalism (like Chinese boxes) elaborated by valiant Calvinist jurists such as Johannes Althussius, on the basis of the experience of the cities and of the North German mercantile states between the 16th and the 17th century: in an exquisitely 'European' age and civilization, which (not only in the Hanseatic League) experienced the maximum possible expansion of "contract" and of the private over the political, on the eve of the statist triumph of absolute monarchies. What ties our own time to that century is precisely the return of the primacy of the private and of the individual."[18]

Thanks to this awareness, and confronted with a Soviet universe that after decades was becoming characterized more and more by miseries and police violence, Miglio was able to draw all sorts of conclusions. He saw the disintegration of the state *par excellence* — the Soviet one — as the anticipation of other and not any less dramatic collapses. When, in 1997, some critics appealed to the decisionist Miglio of the "Milan Group" in order to challenge his latest positions, the old senator answered that, from 1983 (when he published his project concerning a presidential constitution) to today, "the world has changed, and what has rendered that kind of proposal obsolete has been the dissolution of the communist system: that collapse and what followed 1989 have posed in new terms the problem of the modern state."[19] In that dialogue, he concluded that the "age of eternal and immutable 'states' is over."[20]

Federalism was Miglio's great obsession. In addition, during his last years it was understood in relation to a renewed interest in free exchange, competition, and freedom of contract. The connection between federalism and market economics can be found precisely in the ability to stipulate arrangements: "Toward the end of the 20th century, a phase of the modern state has reached an end; the idea that citizens should be framed once and for all is in crisis. This crisis is tied to the decline of the concept of state law and the gradual emergence of the primacy of contract, which must be matched by an institutional system in which freely negotiated

18. Miglio, *Una Costituzione per i Prossimi Trent'Anni*, *op. cit.*, pp. 142-143.

19. Gianfranco Miglio and Marcello Veneziani, *Padania, Italia. Lo Stato Nazionale è in Crisi o non è mai Esistito?* ed. by Marco Ferrazzoli (Florence: Le Lettere, 1997), pp. 95-6.

20. *Ibid.*, p. 94.

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pacts prevail; rather, in which law develops out of the contract."[21]

When Miglio was asked what he thought about reconciling "this significant concession to a perspective not only federalist, but altogether 'libertarian,' with his earlier 'decisionist' doctrine," his answer was clear: "I have never been an 'integral decisionist'; I mean, I have always been careful not to attribute to the 'decision' the kind of transcendental import, along authoritarian lines, while Carl Schmitt and Hermann Heller seem to attribute to it." In other words, for Miglio to show, against Hans Kelsen, the irreducibility of the political dimension does not imply a glorification of the state, coercion, or "organized" violence. He did not believe in the least that "an institutional system in which freely negotiated contracts prevail — rather, in which law is born out of contract, and not from allegedly by now indefensible mystical values — is a chaotic system, or at least one highly unpredictable."[22] However, as Miglio also knew, many scholars have demonstrated how dynamic and unstable orders with diffuse power are more rational than static apparatuses unable to self-correct and evolve.

In addition, he knew that the collapse of the *idola* and the myths that characterize modernity (nation, race, class, democracy, technology, etc.) paved the way for a new epoch. The present fortune of federalist theory is thus closely tied to the decline of political obligation, and to the fact that the present age is characterized by the progressive secularization of all old institutional theologies, "while, one by one, myths and all political and non-political fictions fall by the wayside, and the harsh taste of realistic criticism finally reaches even the multitudes."[23] In the society that seems to loom on the horizon, "everything will be based on the (material) inviolability of the rule *pacta sunt servanda*. . . . The whole system will be much more coordinated, automatic and foreseeable than the one associated with the now sidelined old sovereign state."[24]

For Miglio, the centrality of this *impersonal decision* implied a close connection between the market and federalism, and the overcoming of that dichotomy between public and private law that Bruno Leoni had courageously challenged.[25] If, during the 1970s, Miglio had seen in the opposition state-market a conflict that seemed "destined to last to the end of time,"[26] during his last years he put forth an even more radical position, which prefigured a universe within which artificial barriers between different universes can be dissolved. The same sociological analysis of power and of its rootedness in originally *non-juridical*

21. *Ibid.*, pp. 90-91.
22. Miglio, *Una Costituzione per i Prossimi Trent'Anni*, *op. cit.*, p. 143.
23. Gianfranco Miglio, "L'Italia Unita dalla Retorica," in *Per un'Italia Federale* (Milan: Il Sole 24 Ore, 1990), p. 45.
24. Miglio, *Una Costituzione per i Prossimi Trent'Anni*, *op. cit.*, p. 143.
25. See Mario Stoppino, "La Grande Dicotomia Diritto Privato-Diritto Publico e il Pensiero di Bruno Leoni," in *Il Politico* (1982), Vol. 1, pp. 115-130. See also Bruno Leoni, *Freedom and Law* (Princeton: Van Nostrand, 1961).
26. Miglio, "La Trasformazione dell'Attuale Sistema Economico," *op. cit.*, p. 619.

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relations (not institutionalized) helps throw some light on the matter.

But what is likely to be remembered as Miglio's main theoretical contribution (the theory of *double obligation* — political and contractual) led him to appreciate more and more the market economy, and to oppose the state's productive apparatuses, public monopolies, and redistributive schemes (the source of his eventual condemnation of the transfer of resources from Northern to Southern Italy). Despite the often proclaimed independence of the political scientist *vis-à-vis* values, Miglio was an engaged defender of individual rights and, at the same time, an implacable critic of his country's worst customs. Thus, along with Gaetano Mosca, Vilfredo Pareto and Bruno Leoni — a tradition of thought which has yet to be reconstructed historically and clearly identified — Miglio, the ruthless realist, managed to be an intransigent adversary of Italian statism.

Furthermore, Miglio sought to reconcile very different theoretical frameworks such as continental European thought, libertarianism and American federalism. The detached analysis of the mechanisms of decision and of the statist "fiction" (which does not have an independent existence, but lives only by virtue of those who benefit from it, or at least respect it) paved the way for prefiguring new forms of law, sociality, economy, and politics. Awareness of the *historical* and eminently modern character of state institutions that followed the crisis of the medieval order, strengthens an hypothesis such as Miglio's, meant to inquire into the possibilities that could open after state power dissolves, as was the case toward the end of the 1980s, following an unforeseen implosion, i.e., the socialist systems of Central and Eastern Europe (the most statist institutions ever produced by modernity).

Along with few other scholars, Miglio understood the importance of paying attention — even if only within a comparative framework — to cultural and institutional experiences involving the pluralism that modern history has generated, but has not been able to safeguard. Besides Hanseatic cities, he was not unaware of events in Holland, where there was a plurality of power centers competing and collaborating with each other.[27] In other words, Miglio understood that lost or defeated civilizations (the Dutch one was wiped out by the Napoleonic army) still have something to teach, and that, most of all, there is something absolutely contingent in the triumph of the "sovereign" state model that became predominant during the last few centuries.[28]

Miglio emphasized how history not only shows the ephemeral character of public apparatuses which claim to be eternal, but which, instead, have had a beginning and will have an end: he also showed how the competitive dispersal of

27. See Gianfranco Miglio, "Il Contratto Sovrano. Intervista su una Costituzione Federale," an interview with Alberto Mingardi, in *élites*, Vol. III, No. 2 (April-June 1999), pp. 21-27.

28. See Hendryk Spruyt, *The Sovereign State and its Competitors. An Analysis of Systems Change* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994); and Martin van Creveld, *The Rise and Decline of the State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

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power in federal systems is a major obstacle to the indiscriminate growth of state arbitrariness, taxation, and regulation. Decentralized political societies — from the free medieval communes to the Hanseatic cities to the Swiss confederation — privileged the market, competition, and collaboration. In other words, libertarianism and neo-federalist theory increasingly tend to converge.

For Miglio, federalism is not a tool meant to unite, but to "manage and oversee *diversity*."[29] It seeks to facilitate "the passage from unity to plurality: *ex uno plures*,"[30] to the point that it is possible to legitimately regard federal relations as those which "*dissolve the hierarchical conception of power*, by substituting it with a dynamics of power relations articulated in competing spheres."[31] This explains why for Miglio the right to secession is "The right to associate with whomever one wants" and why such a right is "similar to that of resistance, precisely because it is natural, inalienable, and irrevocable by political power."[32]

The foundation of these analyses concerning a federalism to be continually renegotiated is Miglio's theory of double obligation (contractual and political): a framework which, although it has altogether autonomous origins, can make a substantial contribution to libertarian theory — so much so that the neo-federalist concept of political relations is *like a pact*, but also allows for *federations with time limits*: renewable only if the federated states find it just and convincing to do so. In other words, politics loses those traits obsessively anchored to the modern concept of "sovereignty," to the point that all institutional fictions dissolve and reveal their fragility. Thus, politics becomes once again something that takes place among people, more or less disposed to collaborate peacefully, struggle among themselves and stipulate agreements or treaties.

The realization of the necessarily precarious character of human institutions led Miglio to revive an old Jeffersonian concept, according to which every generation must have the freedom to write its own constitution, whose duration is clearly defined. A few years back, he indicated the firm conviction that federal communities in the 21st century "will all be temporally limited: i.e., subject to be 'revised' every 30-50 years. The theological dogma of the immutability of the state, of the sacredness of borders, could be accepted when socio-economic factors changed slowly, but certainly not in our days. And the challenge which will

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29. Gianfranco Miglio, "Presentazione," in Allen Buchanan, *Secessione. Quando e Perché un Paese ha il Diritto di Dividersi* (Milan: Mondadori, 1994), p. VIII.

30. Gianfrance Miglio, "La Prospettiva Teorica del Nuovo Federalismo," in *Federalismo & Società*, Vol. I, No. 2 (1994), p. 29

31. Luigi Marco Bassani, Willian Stewart and Alessandro Vitale, *I Concetti del Federalismo* (Milan: Giuffrè, 1995), p. 38.

32. Miglio and Barbera, *Federalismo e Secessione*, *op. cit.*, p. 180. Thus, neo-federalist culture seeks to realize "a 'foedus' conditioned and temporally limited." See Miglio, "La Prospettiva Teorica del Nuovo Federalismo," *op. cit.*, p. 27. This is why the right to secession "is a prepolitical right that exists, along with the right to resistance, as a *prius* with respect to any politically organized community." (*Ibid.*, p. 35).

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soon have to be confronted by European public law will be precisely that of designing flexible institutions from a temporal viewpoint."[33]

Given this anti-state radicalism it is not an accident that recently some of Miglio's younger students have published numerous studies that prefigure the overcoming of the modern state and emphasize the federal features of various political-institutional traditions.[34] According to this neo-federalist framework, with which Miglio identified himself, the federation is understood as a voluntary accord: a relation among communities that freely enter into a contract and, in so doing, give life to an institution constantly in need of defining and legitimating itself. Because of the federal pact, relations among those participating in public life become *institutionalized*, but without eliminating the constant need of confirmation and consensus on the part of the subjects constituting the pact. This commitment to dialogue marks the life of federal societies even outside the political context: "federalism implies an attitude and a mode of behavior in social relations, beside political ones, that leads to human interactions based on negotiated cooperation, to the sharing among the parts and in co-ordination, rather than to hierarchical relations between superiors and subordinates."[35] For the later Miglio's libertarian federalism, all legitimate power is always delegated. By entering society, people do not give up their freedom, they do not submit themselves to a tyrant, do not reduce themselves voluntarily to a condition of slavery, but simply attribute to a new institution part of their power and accept a series of rules. Yet, they always remain ready to question and challenge them, and establish new ones.

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33. Gianfranco Miglio "Introduzione" to Gianfranco Miglio, ed., *Federalismi Falsi e Degenerati* (Milan: Sperling & Kupfer, 1997), p. xix.

34. For some of the most relevant cultural contributions inspired by Miglio and some of his students, often within the context of Fondazione Italia Federale, see Gianfranco Miglio and Henry D. Thoreau, *Disobbedienza Civile* (Milan: Mondadori, 1993); Buchanan, *Secessione*, *op. cit.*; Daniel J. Elazar, *Idee e Forme del Federalismo*, ed. by Luigi Marco Bassani (Milan: Edizioni di Comunità, 1994); Bassani, Stewart and Vitale, *I Concetti del Federalismo*, *op. cit.*; Miglio and Barbera, *Federalismo e Secessione*, *op. cit.* Here, the main reference is the work of Martin Diamond and especially that of Daniel J. Elazar, who has located in federalist theory the possibility to reject the traditional concept of the state: both the hierarchic and the organic versions.

35. Elazar, *Idee e Forme del Federalismo*, *op. cit.*, p. 65.

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Liberalism: Ideal and Reality

James Kalb

Why does liberalism — the tradition that makes equal freedom the political touchstone — combine such strength with such incoherence? The attempt to make freedom dominant leads to contradiction. Liberalism is triumphant almost everywhere, but its victory reverses the meaning of its principles. It calls for live-and-let-live, and enforces it by supervising everything. For the sake of freedom, it empowers bureaucrats to reconstruct human nature. It appeals to "the people," while reserving the right to make them into whatever it thinks fit.[1]

The stark contradiction between freedom and equality as the goal and all-pervading control by governing elites as the means is surprising, since liberals prize clarity, coherence, and rationality so highly. Liberalism defines itself by reasonableness, which it makes its ideal. However, the development of liberalism demonstrates that the attempt to be reasonable can be carried to the point of irrationality.

For the sake of reasonableness, liberals aim at principles acceptable to all; anything less would force some to be subservient to others. The quest for such principles is to lead to a truly fair and consensual society. Liberalism is thus inspired by the dream of political principles that rule without oppressiveness, because they have the universality, transparency, power, and modesty of logic. Equal freedom, like the principle of non-contradiction, is to apply everywhere, without interfering with anything one might legitimately think or do.

The dream of a truly free and rational political order survives all criticism, comes back from all defeats, and only grows stronger with the passing of time. Liberals may claim to be realistic, skeptical, multicultural, postmodern or whatever, but all the rethinking and reformulation of their views leaves untouched the fundamental standards everyone is expected to accept without challenge. The only real questions are what justification shall be given to principles already settled in advance, and how those principles shall be realized. To reject the liberal principle of equal freedom as the ultimate political standard is unthinkable. It would be to accept the power of some to force their preferences on others, and thus in principle to accept oppression.

Accepting equal freedom as the standard, however, means an attempt to abolish politics. Compulsion is the stuff of politics as well as a denial of equal freedom.

1. For an extended description and analysis of anti-liberal aspects of contemporary managerial liberalism, see Paul Edward Gottfried, *After Liberalism: Mass Democracy in the Managerial State* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999).

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The liberal response is to try to settle an ever-broader range of issues pre-politically. An example is the insistence on continual expansion of constitutional and international human rights guarantees. If effective, such provisions would progressively reduce the role of force in society, by defining the goals and methods that are legitimate in public life in such a way that only minor choices and administrative and interpretive questions could arise. Public life would by stages lose its importance; in the end, each person would be able to pursue his private ends friction-free, without interfering with the ability of others to do likewise.

Some such goal is necessary for liberalism; to abandon it would, once again, be to accept oppression in principle. Liberalism thus aims at utopia. It is moderate in secondary respects, but the utopianism is fundamental. A view that makes liberation of individual preference the standard must accept established patterns of conduct to some degree, while it works to transform them. In the long run, what counts is that liberalism puts a single abstract standard with comprehensive implications for all human affairs at the center of politics. Whatever its preferred manner of operation, liberalism is therefore essentially perfectionistic.

This perfectionism has serious practical consequences. Liberalism is not able to borrow authority from transcendent faith, but must rely on what it has to offer in this world. Its idealism has to do with results in the here and now, and not pie in the sky. Further, its moderation is not backed by substantive principles that set definite limits to the demands of equal freedom. When liberalism is victorious, equal freedom pushes moderation aside. Its requirements are peremptory, and nothing but practical difficulties, which ingenuity and effort can presumptively overcome, stand in the way of doing what seems right. If, for example, rooting out the social importance of sexual and ethnic distinctions turns out to be an endless process requiring an ever-more pervasive regime of re-education, quotas, and thought control, then that is what there will be.[2]

Because liberalism is opposed to compulsion, in a sense it must oppose extremism, but this opposition does not mean that the demand for equal freedom cannot go to extremes. What it means is that the demand for equal freedom defeats itself when taken as ultimate. To become an ultimate political standard, equal freedom must be treated as an aspect of rationality, since if it is not simply rational it is only one preference among many and as such is entitled to no special authority. Treating it as simply rational, however, means thought control and tyranny, since it means that those who object to its ever-ramifying implications, which have come to include the continuing transformation of all social relations, must be treated as lunatic or criminal.

Fundamental opposition to liberalism becomes unacceptable and even

2. Liberalism nonetheless maintains the appearance of reason and moderation by defining whatever opposes it as ignorance and bigotry. Part of the liberal abolition of the political is treating opposition as sub-political. Thus, now to oppose "affirmative action" smacks of extremism.

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unspeakable in a liberal society. Political correctness is no vagary. Advanced liberalism imposes a sort of soft totalitarianism; indoctrination of the people, medicalization of dissent, and ritualistic treatment of democratic forms are its necessary consequences. In the end, liberal opposition to extremism becomes less a restraint on liberal governments than an aspect of their final self-contradiction: liberalism necessarily opposes what it necessarily becomes.

Paradox is not new within liberalism. The development of the liberal tradition has been marked by reversals of meaning. Contemporary and classical liberalism may be unified in principle, but they are radically opposed on particulars. The political tradition that once called for small government, property rights, individual responsibility, and bourgeois morality now demands guaranteed security and sexual freedom for the wards of the custodial state. The opposition between older and newer forms of liberalism has led some to deny that they can sensibly be treated as part of a single continuing political tradition.[3] Nonetheless, the transformation from old to new was compelled by the very principles that made classical liberalism what it was, and not by some external influence that subverted and destroyed an outlook that would otherwise have remained stable.

Since its beginnings, liberalism has been based on rejection of claims to moral authority that transcend human purposes. The consequence has been recognition of the equal value of wills and their goals; if there is no authority higher than individual desire, then individual desire becomes authoritative. Those principles have been constantly at work in the liberal tradition, but their implications have varied depending on the social setting and the possibilities it offered.

Liberalism was originally defined by opposition to religious and hierarchical institutions that obstructed the equal right to do what one chooses. It therefore abolished those institutions to create a public realm in which each could do as he liked. It did not abolish inequality and compulsion, but only limited them to private life, the role of which it expanded by limiting the state. "Private life," which was exempt from liberal standards, included economic and home life, not to mention religion, scholarship, and the arts, and thus constituted by far the greater and more important part of social life. It was not at all private in function. Under classical liberalism, the social order was able to go on much as before, relying on established sex roles, ethnic and class distinctions, unequal property, and particularistic cultural norms. Such things had been clearly legitimate in earlier, more particularistic and hierarchical forms of society, but the liberal principle of equal freedom deprived them of ethical justification. Once the possibility arose of replacing them with a comprehensive rational system of social management, it therefore became very difficult for liberals to continue to accept them. The consequence has been contemporary liberalism.

Classical and managerial liberalism are thus successive stages of a single tendency

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3. See, e.g., Gottfried, *After Liberalism*, *op. cit.*

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of thought. As such, they share both fundamental principles and a fundamental flaw. Liberals who have fallen behind the times complain that political correctness is oppressive and therefore illiberal. They are right, but from the standpoint of equal freedom the straight white male upper-class standards that applied during the classical liberal period were also oppressive and illiberal. Political correctness does no more than reconfigure the contradictions present in all liberal societies between the demand for equal freedom and the social necessity of hierarchy and constraint. All forms of liberalism attempt to abolish that necessity, at least in appearance, by making inequality and compulsion pre-political, and so taking them off the public stage. In classical liberalism, the distinction between public and private provided a way to make what was considered political life free and equal, by restricting inequalities to what was considered private life. In contemporary liberalism, the concept of "human rights" serves a similar function. Now as before, some people — husbands, factory owners, diversity consultants — tell others what to do, and the compulsion is squared with equal freedom by treating it as pre-political and silencing those who question it as bigoted, crazy, or immoral.

Those who treat liberalism as a continuous and relatively coherent tradition are therefore right. It is in fact a tradition of enormous strength and stability that has endured for centuries. It is strongest in the societies universally judged most successful, and is especially strong among the intelligent and well-educated, most of whom can conceive of no other political position. Even those who understand the difficulty of making liberalism coherent and justify it rationally almost never reject it, but rather attempt to re-invent it in one way or another. Such success cannot be by chance. In its fully developed contemporary form, liberalism claims universality, demands transparency, and opposes the use of force against legitimate opposition. Such qualities impose a high standard. To justify by that standard the success liberalism has achieved, especially among the enlightened classes that support it most strongly, it ought to be based on clear and coherent principles acceptable to all reasonable men.

Liberalism is plainly not so based, but is ever more visibly self-contradictory. The contradiction at its heart, reflected in the transformation of classical to contemporary liberalism and in the absurdities of political correctness, is already implicit in the notion of government based on individual consent. Government is compulsion. If there is consent, government is not needed; to the extent it is needed, it must therefore be based on something else. The notion of "equal freedom" extends the self-contradiction: it proposes a state of affairs in which no goal is given preference over any other, i.e., an impossibility, since to achieve one goal is necessarily to thwart others. It follows that equal freedom cannot coherently become the center of political life, as liberalism would have it. When it takes priority over substantive common goods, so that politics becomes a matter of keeping one preference from oppressing other preferences, the impossibility of achieving any preference without suppressing others means that for the sake of

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equality suppression must become universal. Anything anyone does that affects others can be an unwanted imposition and thus an act of aggression. Prevention of oppression therefore comes to require government to control everything. Taken seriously, "equal freedom" turns out to be the same as comprehensive despotism.

To accept a way of thinking that leads to such a result seems deeply irrational. What is it about the way people view politics that makes something so self-defeating so compelling to so many thoughtful people? There may be no single answer. Anything as enduring and successful as liberalism must draw support from many sources: historical, social, psychological, as well as philosophical. Further, no simple description can altogether fit a tendency of thought that contradicts itself. Liberalism is many things. It is anarchic as well as tyrannical, law-abiding as well as antinomian, puritanical as well as relativistic, averse to the exercise of power as well as fascinated by it. There is even a modest practical liberalism that serves to moderate and humanize the non-liberal principles that of necessity continue to order life in all societies. Liberal anarchy and corruption, and also a certain amount of liberal decency, tolerance, and law-abidingness mitigate liberal despotism.

Nonetheless, the contradictions are real, and an explanation must be attempted. The tendencies in liberalism certainly do not determine everything about the beliefs and conduct of all liberals, but they have become increasingly prominent as time has passed, and they result from fundamental principles that liberals quite generally accept. It is puzzling that something with as much contradiction at its heart as liberalism should seem so rationally compelling to so many who should be good judges. To begin to understand contemporary politics, some sort of explanation is needed.

There are of course dismissive explanations. The call for equal freedom could be a way of seizing control under the goal of universal liberation. The reduction of politics to administration, technique, and interpretation that liberalism tries to effect would put all power in the hands of the classes that find it most persuasive. While such explanations help somewhat, they are inadequate for something that has lasted as long, and has aroused as much genuine conviction as liberalism. A deep and enduring conviction of its truth on the part of intelligent, well-placed, and public-spirited people has been crucial to its success. A more principled explanation is therefore needed, i.e., one that explains the rational appeal of liberalism rather than explaining it away.

For the sake of argument, it might be said that liberalism is part of an outlook associated with nominalism and modern natural science that to most educated people today seems equivalent to rationality. As such, it will maintain its dominance in one form or another no matter what difficulties it creates until an understanding of rationality that is to a large degree independent of that outlook becomes generally accepted. The view that modern natural science is uniquely authoritative as a way of understanding the world is widely accepted today. The reasons seem compelling. Science provides knowledge that is as objective and

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reliable as humanly possible. The model of knowledge it offers is especially persuasive to those who are skeptical of the power of reason to provide knowledge of the nature of things by grasping substantive universals like God, substance, or the Good. It seems to provide a way of knowing that does not rely on such things. Further, science has the prestige that comes with overwhelming practical success. It has radically extended man's control over the physical world, and its usefulness in attaining and holding power make it impossible to ignore or belittle. TV and modern medicine work everywhere, so do military jets and tanks, and men of all backgrounds can be trained to use them.

The scientific approach to things appears to have the advantage of clarity and cross-cultural universality. It discounts tradition and revelation, as well as habitual common understandings, which are difficult to define precisely and vary by time and place. Instead, it emphasizes things on which precise and reliable agreement can be attained, such as formal logic, mathematical relationships, and methods of observation that may require specialized training, but yield reproducible results that do not depend on personal idiosyncrasy or particular cultural preconceptions. To the extent possible, it ties beliefs to what can be clearly perceived, quantified, controlled and made clear to o ther observers. When it builds on such things, it tries to do so as simply as possible, in accordance with Ockham's Razor, and in ways that can be clearly specified and tested.

Such procedures have proven extremely effective where they can be applied. They draw enormous power from self-imposed limitations that minimize ontological commitments, and success seems to justify the wisdom of those limitations. Such procedures also create a certain bias in connection with ethical issues. In particular, they lead men to treat satisfaction of preferences as the goal of morality and social order. After all, the things relevant to action that can be most readily recognized, measured, compared, and controlled are pleasures, pains, desires, and preferences, what works and what does not. Sticking to those things as much as possible seems a requirement of Ockham's Razor and the scientific approach. What one wants and how to get it have therefore become authoritative for modern morality, just as senses and the ability to control nature are authoritative for modern natural science.

To turn the hedonistic bias that makes human preferences the standard of value into full-blown liberalism, all that is needed is the logical consideration that, since all preferences are equal, each has equal claim to be a standard of value. The transcultural success of science thus seems to support the universal validity of the fundamental goal of liberalism, i.e., equal freedom for all preferences, because it is the goal that seems most consistent with the scientific way of doing things. That way of doing things even makes liberalism appear simply rational. Since equal freedom seems sufficient to give rise to an ethical system, to go beyond it in any substantive way would apparently violate Ockham's Razor and thus rationality as now understood. Any value other than maximum equal freedom for all preferences therefore

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seems, to most educated people today, an arbitrary personal addition that cannot claim objective validity or serve as a public standard of morality.

It is, of course, impossible actually to treat all preferences equally. The goals of Catholics, Muslims, Nazis, and liberal secularists clash irretrievably, and no government can be neutral among them. The liberal response is to make what seems the minimum deviation necessary from strict neutrality by turning neutrality into a substantive principle. Since not all goals can be accommodated, the preference will be given to neutral ones, those that interfere as little as possible with the goals set by others. After all, if the conflict of goals is the problem, and each goal is intrinsically as good as every other, it appears reasonable to favor the goals that cause fewest conflicts. Such a principle seems as little substantive as possible, and accepting it therefore seems in the spirit of Ockham's Razor and modern natural science. Certainly, people feel it as such; any other substantive ethical standard is denounced as dogmatic and oppressive. There is enormous reluctance today to propose substantive moral principles that are to be authoritative for those who reject them; the appeal of the liberal approach is that it seems to minimize the need to do so.

Making neutrality a positive standard is not neutral in its effects, however. It abolishes all traditional cultural and religious understandings of morality, dependent as they are on authoritative substantive universals such as human virtue or the will of God, and therefore destroys traditional family and communal arrangements that rely on those understandings. It replaces them with the managerial liberal state. Liberal neutrality turns the purpose of moral and political order into helping men attain their goals, as long as those goals are consumption goods and other private indulgences not essentially connected to the goals of others. Such neutral goals, of course, are the ones managers and markets can deal with most easily. To put them at the center of things is to make public life a matter not of public goods, but of administration, technical skill, and interpretation of formal *a priori* principles such as equality and value neutrality. Popular participation becomes out of place, because such issues are best handled by experts, and because majorities might enforce their substantive preferences on others. And since acting on non-neutral preferences that affect others — traditional loyalties and moral understandings, for example — is now to be treated as an act of oppression, uprooting tendencies to act that way becomes an important government function.

Politically-correct managerial liberalism is thus the natural consequence of an outlook that affirms modern natural science as the model for substantive knowledge of the world, and makes equal freedom the highest goal. It is so firmly founded in understandings now generally established that it is hard to see how it can be replaced without radical transformation of intellectual life. Regardless of the problems it runs into, the arguments it presents have become unanswerable in current discussion. Liberalism resolves disputes by letting each do as he likes consistent with the equal freedom of others, and in case of conflict the more tolerant wins. Which part of that approach is to be rejected, and how? If

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equal freedom is to be rejected as an ultimate standard, some public source of knowledge regarding substantive morality that justifies subordinating some preferences to others simply because of what they are is necessary. What is that source to be, and how can people agree on it?

It is unlikely that such agreement can come about within the bounds of a worldview defined by modern natural science. None of the solutions offered for the pathologies of managerial liberalism that stay within such a worldview seem workable. Classical liberals and libertarians propose subordinating the claims of equal freedom to limitations on government action. It appears impossible to do so in a way that will stand up to objections. Every attempt at line-drawing — property rights, states' rights, family privacy, constitutionally limited government, freedom of association, increasingly even freedom of speech — has eventually been discredited as a hypocritical and intolerable shield for oppression. When the central government claims that to protect equal freedom against some concrete threat it must extend its authority at the expense of lesser jurisdictions, the benefits of maintaining local autonomy always seem too indirect and speculative to worry about in the face of a specific abuse.[4]

Some suggest trumping the managerial state by making democracy the final standard, but letting the will of the greater number outweigh equal freedom seems clearly tyrannical.[5] Any polity that avoids the excesses of managerial liberalism must no doubt have a populist element. By itself, however, populism seems less an answer than an attempt to avoid the necessity of dealing with troublesome issues by appealing to the people as a sort of *deus ex machina*. Progressives have expected the people to do away with class society and its oppressions, while conservatives have expected them to save traditional ways from social planners. Both have hoped they would save thinkers the trouble of defining an alternative to liberalism. Such strategies have always failed, and with the growing incoherence of "the people" look less promising than ever.

How then can one go forward, when it seems impossible either to leave

4. If the central and subordinate jurisdictions had different reasons for existing, for example common security, on the one hand, and religious solidarity, on the other, effective resistance to centralization might be possible. It is difficult, however, to have a political union in which the principle it is founded on does not become authoritative for all its parts. It is the union, after all, that is responsible for the defense and survival of political society, and it must therefore have first call on the political loyalties of citizens who may be called upon to make ultimate sacrifices. It is therefore doubtful that liberalism can be reconfigured as a principle governing relations among legitimately particularistic lesser jurisdictions, since it would eventually become the standard for public authority in the lesser jurisdictions as well. (In a particular case, of course, a group of substantive polities might negotiate arrangements for handling common defense or other matters that happen to comply with some liberal principles).

5. The will of the people cannot be an ultimate political principle in any case. "The people" is not a natural person, and can exist as a political actor and deliberate as to its actions only by reference to political principles that are more fundamental than its own will.

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things as they are or to change anything fundamental? Managerial liberalism appears to leave no line of development open except further extension of principles that have become visibly self-defeating. Political order need not be derived from reason, but unless it is thought just it will be unstable. It must therefore enjoy the support of whatever standards are thought entitled to compel assent, and such standards constitute rationality as socially understood. If modern natural science is the standard for rationality, then ethics and politics become irrational, because they require substantive principles of a kind neither science nor anything like science can provide. When the irrationality becomes notorious, the regime faces a crisis. It is difficult to abandon science as a standard, however, because of its overwhelming success, its rigorously critical attitude toward nonscientific modes of thought, and the availability of liberalism as a moral and political principle apparently consistent with it.

What lies ahead is therefore most likely to be repeated attempts among intellectuals to reinvent liberalism. These attempts will be unsuccessful, and will correspond in practical politics to incoherence, arbitrariness, and the reign of brute fact. All things come to an end, and the liberal state will eventually do so as well. It is more likely, however, to end through stupidity and the force of circumstances than through intelligence and transcending its own limitations. It is impossible to predict the specific effect of future contingencies, such as changes in populations, loss of moral unity and social cohesion, environmental catastrophe, terrorism and war. It seems likely, however, that the demands emergencies make on social systems that are becoming less and less able to rely on informal connections and settled popular loyalties will make politics increasingly unprincipled and brutal. Recent proposals for reintroduction of torture and trial by military tribunal may be only the beginning. In the end, liberalism may become little more than a formal justification for societies that work in a far more primitive way.

Eventually some new principle of moral and political coherence will no doubt emerge. If current understandings of reason are too narrow and too insistent on their own rigor and self-sufficiency, then others will develop that draw on more resources and recognize the need to rely on knowledge of universals attained through particular religious and cultural traditions. But common understanding of reason cannot be produced to order. Understanding reason is an aspect of a fundamental understanding of things, of what one cannot help but believe about the world. Until such things reorient themselves — a development that cannot be planned or controlled — a period in which speculative political thought will be desperately needed, but rare and unlikely when found to have much public effect.

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Reply to James Kalb

Paul Gottfried

In a feature study in *Modern Age*, and in two recent essays for *Telos*, the first a thoughtful review of my book, *After Liberalism*, James Kalb, an outspoken, erudite legal thinker, finds a family resemblance in liberal thinking from the late Middle Ages on. As explained in his essay "Liberalism: Ideal and Reality," liberalism is "a continuous and coherent tradition." "It is in fact a tradition that has endured for centuries. It is strongest in societies universally judged most successful, and is especially strong among the intelligent and most educated, most of whom can conceive of no other political position." While characterizing this ideological success that has swept away all forms of political and moral opposition, Kalb lists its defining features. "Liberals aim at principles acceptable to all; anything else would make some subservient to others." Liberals, he tells us in *Modern Age*, "are looking for ways to let each man go his own way" and to guarantee "equal freedom" for everyone. Moreover, "since its beginnings liberalism has been based on rejection of claims to moral authority that transcend human purposes, and consequent recognition of the equal value of wills and their goals. If there is no authority higher than desire, then desire becomes authoritative. Such principles have been constant, but their implications have varied depending on the social setting and the possibilities it offered."

Kalb is aware of certain "contradictions" that have plagued the liberal project, and sees them at work in the fateful "transformation of classical to contemporary liberalism and in the absurdities of political correctness." The arbitrariness, literally and metaphorically, to which liberal attitudes reduce political life, and the need to maintain the charade of obtaining individual consent, when "government is compulsion," lead to a serious problem in the manufacturing of consensus. This problem is partly managed by "settling an ever-broadening range of issues pre-politically, through international constitutional and human rights guarantees. If effective, such provisions would progressively reduce the role of force in society" and take thorny and contentious issues out of public life. Another way leading out of the anarchy of conflicting wills and desires unleashed by liberal doctrine is the appeal to "science" and "rationality" as impartial arbiters of individual claims. For want of real communal standards, liberals enshrine various scientific models, however questionable their claims to being scientific, as a touchstone for "policies" about which all rational people should agree. Liberals also move necessarily from political to social control to solve cultural differences

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and to remove opposition to their projected course of action "pre-politically." If everyone can be made to behave in a "caring" or "tolerant" manner before they enter the political sphere, one does not have to deal with what liberalism never recognized, i.e., the inevitability of political antagonisms or what Carl Schmitt describes as "friend-enemy distinctions."

All of this *legerdemain* is caused by the unwillingness of liberals to take political life seriously enough and by their insistence that what they believe is both individually based and universalistic. Moreover, since any "unwanted imposition" on individual autonomy may be viewed as "oppressive," the government ends up controlling everything to prevent oppression. "Taken seriously, 'equal freedom' turns out to be the same as comprehensive despotism." The move from the old to ever-newer liberalism is driven by the conceptual dynamic and the inherent contradictions of liberalism. Liberals have never risen above the primal sin of believing that all human wants and aspirations deserve equal regard or above the moral neutrality and escape from political life that are related to this false belief. They operate along a trajectory of thinking that stretches from the Ockhamite break from medieval political and moral thought to the state-of-the-art absurdities of multicultural indoctrination. The only bright spot may be that "managerial liberalism appears to leave no line of development except further extensions of principles that have become visibly self-defeating." The rationality invoked by liberals may help reveal the arbitrary tyranny into which their ideas have brought the present generation. In the end, they may admit their errors and turn elsewhere for social and moral solutions.

There is in fact nothing Kalb says that would lead one to believe that the current political-educational-media elites are going to abandon a successful hegemonic ideology because they find it insufficiently uplifting. They may abandon it or retreat from some of its implications, if they no longer find it useful. But it is equally possible they will persist in the same ideas no matter what, because of what they have always believed, in the same way that Henry VIII could never break from the sacraments of the Catholic Church even when he repudiated and caused his countrymen to reject papal supremacy in England. It is also not clear what the new paradigm awaited by Kalb is to be; and so perhaps it would be best to turn away from this wishful thinking to other subjects. Most of what Kalb presents is remarkably cogent in terms of the bundle of contradictions that lies at the core of liberalism and in terms of his premise that liberal ideas are so compelling, because they seem to have been around for ages. Kalb, furthermore, draws on the insights of Schmitt when he tells us that liberals are allergic to the idea of political force, and therefore have to bootleg power into public life by calling it something else. Although not all liberals have thought or acted this way, it is a striking characteristic of contemporary liberal practice. Kalb deals very well with the hypocritical and insidious games that managerial liberals play to manipulate their subjects "pre-politically," so that everyone is suitably brainwashed by the time public life

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comes into view. All social policies, particularly crusades against insensitivity, invariably involve such massive attempts at pre-political socialization.

Like Max Weber, Carl Schmitt, Henri Dumont, Panajotis Kondylis, and other thinkers, Kalb is providing an essentialist, rather than a historically-based interpretation of the cluster of ideas associated with liberals and liberalism. Kalb suggests that by giving up a medieval way of thinking, the Western world fell upon another one that has become increasingly a problem. This replacement view keeps morphing into more and more ominous forms, leading from classical liberalism and its attendant bourgeois institutions, to managerial liberalism and multicultural tyranny. But what lies behind these and other successive incarnations, Kalb says, are the same liberal ideas about the equal value of all desires, the moral autonomy of the individual, and the retreat of the political into civil anarchy or managerial oppression.

There are certain reservations that should be expressed about this view. It starts off as a broad generalization, but then Kalb finds himself knee-deep in other conceptual points of reference as soon as he tries to deal with necessary particularities. It is a long stretch, after all, from late medieval nominalism, whose voluntarism ushers in, among other movements, the Protestant Reformation, the new science, and the background of both the sovereign state and government by consent, through the bourgeois nation-state of the 19th and early 20th centuries down to the multicultural managerial state in which the process under examination culminates. It is hard to see how one can encapsulate these developments by means of the catchall concept "liberalism." It is one thing to trace ideas back to older ones or to acknowledge conceptual connections between beliefs held in one century and those that surface in another. It is something else, however, to treat the last several centuries of Western political life as the unfolding of ideas that became dominant in the late Middle Ages and in the early modern period.

Kalb gives the game away when he explains: "Paradox is not new within liberalism. The development of liberalism has been marked by the reversal of meanings. Contemporary and classical liberalism may be unified in principle but are radically opposed on particulars." How exactly can this be? Where there are "reversal of meanings" and radical opposition on "particulars" taking place, one may have to conclude that huge differences are also present, even if everyone continues to appeal to the same "principles." In order to avoid multiplying causes *praeter necessitatem*, it may be necessary to think that in this situation one is dealing with different movements and currents. Kalb certainly grasps this possibility, and therefore engages in list building, by listing all the related ideas that liberalism picks up in the course of its tortured history. Liberals have believed in "science," "perfectionism," the rule of legality, the avoidance of government, and, more recently, managerial rule and political correctness. Presumably, everyone who takes over these associations is equally and consubstantially "liberal." Though the "social setting" is being constantly rearranged, the belief system supposedly stays

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the same, having been put in place sometime at the end of the Middle Ages. Admittedly, a certain amount of political language has stayed more or less the same for centuries, e.g., freedom and justice; and more talk about individual fulfillment has cropped up in the last two hundred years than one finds in earlier periods. But there are simply too many fossil gaps to be accounted for.

For some reason, 19th century bourgeois liberals (excluding those like J. S. Mill, who were radical democrats) sound nothing like the liberals described by Kalb. Francois Guizot, Lord Palmerston, Fitzjames Stephen, Hegel, and even the classical liberal economist Vilfredo Pareto were highly critical of egalitarian thinking, and did not believe that everyone's desires and appetites should be given equal moral weight. Guizot, Acton and Gladstone were engaged Christians, who built their arguments for constitutional liberty largely on religious grounds. Guizot, Acton, and Hegel leveled attacks on the French Revolution that incorporated aspects of Burke's criticism of the same event; all of them speak of it necessarily moving from anarchy and a bizarre cult of reason into tyranny and aggression. Acton, particularly in his post-Civil War correspondence with Robert E. Lee, defended the Confederacy as a bastion of constitutional liberty; Hegel, another spokesman for ordered freedom and property rights, criticized the English Reform Act of 1832, which he saw in draft form, as a reckless democratic experiment. There is a veritable gulf separating those considered as "liberal" in the early and mid-19th century and their questionable counterparts in the 20th century — and *a fortiori* the present age. This point is stressed in meticulous detail in a study of John Stuart Mill (forthcoming from the University of Missouri Press).

Although it is possible to find Renaissance and Enlightenment thinkers who foreshadow later intellectual trends, it is less clear that these figures belong to a continuum leading into our political culture. A point made by Arthur Herman in a forthcoming exhaustive study of the Scottish Enlightenment is that the objects of his study, particularly the moral philosopher Thomas Reid, are worthy of examination for specific historical reasons: they defend the commercial society then coming into being in the English world, and represent a dramatic break from earlier Western thought. Reid's notion that a "common sense" is naturally present in all cognitively unimpaired human beings and can serve as a guide to moral action creates an epistemic basis, according to Herman, for popular government. But this incipiently democratic ethical theory was not a widely held position on the continent, and found opposition even in the Anglophone world from those who stressed man's dependence on divine grace for moral enlightenment or the need for intensive humanistic education to acquire a knowledge of the Good.

Equally important, ideas that Kalb associates with the genealogy of liberalism often emerged mixed in with traditional concepts and concerns. Thus Hobbes, as shown by English scholars Howard Warrender and Francis Hood, retains a great deal of scholastic language in his often contradictory discussion of justice and natural law. Hobbes moves freely from a starkly positivist definition of justice,

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depending on the keeping of promises in a situation of sovereigns making laws, to a reaffirmation of the "law of God" found in the Bible and known through reasoning. Moreover, both Hobbes and Locke make ample use of scripture to undergird their atomistic and, in that sense, ultramodern conceptions of civil society. And they do so with good reason! The social contract theory that they feature came recognizably from the tracts of George Buchanan and of the Scottish Covenanters of the late 16th and early 17th centuries. These dour Calvinists, as in Buchanan's *De Jure Regni apud Scotos* (1579), combine a prematurely modern constructivist theory of the state with biblically based warnings against tyranny. A political theory Kalb would identify with an anti-historical form of liberalism came to life among religious traditionalists in the British Isles and found defenders among Spanish Jesuits in the same period. As Kalb is certainly aware, early Americans, like James Wilson, held Locke to be a religious Christian, partly because he devised a political theory that would protect pious Americans against tyrants. Much of what Kalb sees as the socially disintegrative and atomistic sides of liberalism may have developed as the unintended consequence of ideas that once seemed to serve other, more traditionalist purposes.

In fact, what Kalb proves is not very different from what is demonstrated in *After Liberalism* and in its sequel, now in press: managerial democracy feeds on established traditions of thought that it adapts to its changing needs. Such a perspective, which moves from the present backward, does not deny that the past influences the present. But it also recognizes that those who are now politically and culturally dominant desire and therefore construct a usable past. They scour earlier times as a personalized rubble heap out of which they can frame a genealogical defense for their projects. They take what they fancy and throw away the rest as outdated or "fascistic." But how different is this practice from the efforts of the Nazis, or of the Anti-Defamation League, to find anti-Semitism pervading the Western heritage, or from the attempts of feminist and gay activists to locate people like themselves in other eras. Liberals are not the only ones who preempt the past for current agendas; and all of those who do so try to make fits, however awkwardly, between the figures, ideas, and movements of different epochs. Of course, what did transpire in the past was usually not as clearly indicative of later developments as the manufacturers of preferred histories argue.

What seems most significant about the alliance of mass democracy and the managerial state is that it leads to a radical and irreversible break from bourgeois society and its conservative liberal ideas. The new order's appeal to democracy is an attempt to justify a managerial revolution in which popular rule is reduced to plebiscitary procedures and "democratic" socialization by the state. The older constitutional liberalism is kept as window-dressing, but is progressively hollowed out, supposedly to remove its "elitist," "racist," and "sexist" character. At the end of this process, only judges, administrators, and the media exercise effective power, though politicians and parties play a functional role by organizing

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elections and funneling patronage. The last, like welfare and entitlements, assure supporters for the system.

Once the managerial state has taken over the practice of democracy, eventually in alliance with the media-journalistic priesthood, it and its defenders can determine the meanings of god terms, such as "democracy," "justice," "human rights," and "liberalism." Such terms have no other acceptable meanings but those applied to it by recognized and recognizable elites, which define and redefine them in terms of their evolving programs and sentiments. Thus, in 1964, it was "liberal" to believe not only in an extended welfare state, but also that blacks, whites, males, and females should be treated in a non-discriminatory fashion when applying for jobs or admission to a university. By the 1970s, it had become liberal to believe that the government should lean on business and educational leaders to give preferential access to certain designated victims asking for employment or entrance to schools. In the 1930s and 1940s, it was "liberal" to advocate, as Eleanor Roosevelt and Frances Perkins did, the operation of a single-family wage to allow women to remain in the domestic sphere and to raise families. By the 1960s, such a view had become fascistic and pathological, and the state and the media led the way in Western societies in "liberating" women from "gender roles" and in helping to put them into the workforce.

Such apparent reversals of position undertaken by the "liberal" order epitomize only one teaching, i.e., that those in charge are free to jerk around their subjects, who are bought off with entitlements and, more recently, new expressive freedoms. Note every major cultural change spearheaded by the managerial state is away from the bourgeois Christian society that it helped to bury. Hardly a coincidence, this tendency shows the necessary direction that a revolutionary regime or one committed to perpetual revolution takes in relation to its predecessor.

One can admittedly find other reasons that a "liberal" program that fails to deliver the expected results should lead into another, more intrusive one. Policies do have a history of their own. But what may be more striking is that Western "citizens" can be dragged from one social experiment into the next and not only passively accept, as they now do in Europe, the muzzling of speech and scholarship, but persist in believing that every attempt to shackle their freedom and reconstruct their lives is by definition "liberal." This betokens a servile disposition, rather than the effect of a nominalist turn that took place in the Late Middle Ages.

The cultural and religious changes that have accompanied this degradation of liberty and subversion of self-rule are equally distant from bourgeois liberalism. (Bourgeois liberals, who considered the mass of humanity unfit to govern itself, would not be surprised by this political outcome.) The weakening of the nuclear family, the cultural and political war waged against gender roles, the triumph of an obsessively consumerist society, and the prevalent anti-Western cult of victims, pushed by mainline Protestant denominations and by contemporary Christianity generally, are all critical factors for understanding the direction taken

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by "managerial liberalism." But this direction was not entirely determined by the triumph of the managerial state, a crossroads that led to more than one future. Managed democracy might have continued to move in a New Deal or interwar social democratic direction, offering child support and pensions without trying to subvert the nuclear family or to invert or obliterate gender distinctions. In other cultural circumstances, such a regime might have acted more moderately, just as Italian fascism would not have produced such disastrous results if Nazi Germany had not absorbed it politically and ideologically.

The point is that not only is there no straight line leading ideologically from the 13th to the 21st century, but that it is necessary to distinguish among the phases of "managerial liberalism." The inconsistent appeals to rationality that Kalb considers a permanent aspect of liberal governance only characterized the early phase of managerial rule. It has now been supplanted by the appeal to sensitivity on behalf of designated victims, i.e., a political course that in Europe and Canada has brought the criminalization of "insensitive" opinions even if empirically documented. Contemporary liberalism as practiced by "Western democracies" often openly opposes rationality and liberty, although it can rationalize such politics by stressing the preferential rights of those whom the state and the media hold to be victimized. The same "democracies" enjoy the blessings of American "conservatives," as illustrated by the mantras about the "democratic world" that now abound in the *Wall Street Journal* and *National Review*. Would Kalb therefore try to trace the roots of the contemporary, obviously bogus Right back to an earlier conservatism with the same thoroughness that he applies in looking for the liberal antiquities of managerial liberalism? Or would he relentlessly investigate the specifically Christian sources of the Christianity represented by contemporary Christian denominations, i.e., a practice that Nietzsche and the French New Right embraced with considerable enthusiasm? Again, Kalb would want no part of this quest and would insist that Christianity once reduced to multiculturalism is no longer Christian. Why then is liberalism to be treated differently, as an eternal essence that remains the same no matter how much it appears to change?

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Ernst Bloch and Joachim of Fiore[1]

Fabio Vander

On the whole, Ernst Bloch's work is a failed attempt to consider the "revolution in the West" as an imported version of the Soviet model. In fact, his very thorough cultural-historical reconstruction is a function of an interpretation of communism as a radical break with European culture, of which only the mystic, irrational, chiliastic elements forgotten by centuries of rationalism and materialism are worth saving. This is why Joachim of Fiore is significant in Bloch's works. Bloch regarded the 12th century prophet as the first theoretician of that mixture of irrationalism, mysticism and apocalypse necessary to develop an alternative to modern European and bourgeois rationalism.

To go back to Joachim means to go back to the remote origins of the communist revolution — the only revolution able to provide the radical alternative Bloch thought necessary to save humanity and civilization. This is what distinguished Bloch from most of his contemporaries, such as Georg Lukács and Theodor W. Adorno. He considered Lukács' *History and Class Consciousness* to be "an extraordinary book,"[2] because it revived categories such as consciousness, utopia, and "lived moment," which were later rejected in favor of an orthodox Marxism centered on "pure *social* matters," i.e., that was fundamentally determinist.

Bloch remained faithful to his youthful love of Expressionism, the avant-garde, and Bertolt Brecht's alienation effect, which he preferred to Lukács' and Adorno's classicism and "fine Form." He believed that the revolution should mediate structure and superstructure, economy and consciousness, and, most of all, the "warm current of Marxism" — the voluntaristic aspect of modern human nature — which would otherwise be instrumentalized by the adversary. As Remo Bodei put it, "the 'cold current' of Marxism — economism and *Realpolitik* — though indispensable, could not even mobilize the proletariat, and it actually rejects anachronistic sects, the peasants, the unemployed, and the petty bourgeoisie, who also suffer from capitalist contradictions, but imagine that they can overcome them only through romantic anti-capitalism — first and foremost, the Nazi 'revolution'."[3]

Lukács' judgment mirrors Adorno's, whose early work Bloch also appreciated, particularly his aesthetics centered on passion, instinct, and a "chaos" which

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1. Translated from Italian by Eugénie Kunst
2. Ernst Bloch, "Die Welt bis zur Kenntlichkeit verändern" (1974), in *Tagträume vom aufrechten Gang* (Frankfurt a/M: Suhrkamp, 1977), p. 45.
3. Remo Bodei, *Multiversum* (Naples: Bibliopolis, 1982), pp. 41-42

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breaks up "order." Bloch, however, was notoriously hostile to the Adorno of the Frankfurt School, accusing him of having abandoned the "old revolutionary impulse,"[4] in favor of "compromise," "luxury," and "fine Form."[5] Only Marcuse remained close to Bloch. As late as 1968, Bloch still appreciated Marcuse's concept of "utopia."[6] Thus, to study Bloch today can help explain the mistakes and misunderstandings (regarding structure/superstructure, revolution in the West, etc.) of entire generations of intellectuals throughout the 20th century, who felt responsible for the failure of the emancipatory projects they had supported.

Bloch's first and most famous book, *Geist der Utopie* [*The Spirit of Utopia*], which he began writing in 1915 and published in 1918, traces the genesis of the Russian revolution; and he always refers to it when seeking in the East ("let us go East")[7] the solution to the crisis of the West ("the nihilism of the modern era").[8] Bloch knew that the West often fought the East throughout history, from the Greeks against the Persians, to the crusades; but he was also convinced that "it has always been useless to try to resist," because the East regularly influenced the West (from Gothic to Scholastic), and often the West has even asked its antagonist for help. Bloch went so far as to write, in a rather pathetic passage, that "as the heirs of the West, we also continue to search, as if in a dream; the East draws closer again. Our sick and vacuous souls are drawn by an ex *oriente lux*."[9] The decadent West should learn from the mystical and heretical East.

Bloch also irrationalizes Marx, the sociologist of capitalism, in order to emphasize his voluntaristic-fideistic aspect. The "state of the future," he wrote, cannot be "Manchesterian," i.e., predicated on production, work and determinism, but will have to be based on a "world of utopistically superior love": to be reconstructed starting from Baader and Dostoyevsky, and going as far back as the "messianism of the history of heretics."[10]

In *Geist der Utopie*, Joachim is cited only once, along with the "heretic

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4. Bloch, "Die Welt . . .," *op. cit.*, p. 51.

5. The mature Adorno was not an abstract thinker. On the contrary, for him the "dialectic of Enlightenment" meant that intellect and culture must be conscious of that "germ of regression" innate in them; without a positive/negative, progressive/regressive dialectic, the absolutization of negativity and evil favors Nazism. See Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialektik der Aufklärung* (1947) (Frankfurt a/M: Suhrkamp, 1984), p. 13. Adorno went as far as to claim that: "Enlightenment is totalitarian" (*Ibid.*, p. 22), and that this is the destiny of abstract rationalism. The difference between Bloch and Adorno is that the former set out from the irrational to postulate the "rationality of the irrational" (see Bodei, *Multiversum*, *op. cit.*, p. 50), while the latter began with rationality (the "Enlightment") to postulate its "dialectic" with irrationality.

6. Ernst Bloch, "Ein Marxist hat nicht das Recht, Pessimist zu Sein" (1976), in *Tagträume vom aufrechten Gang*, *op. cit.*, p. 115.

7. Ernst Bloch, *Geist der Utopie* [1918] (Frankfurt a/M: Suhrkamp, 1964), p. 213.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 216.

9. *Ibid.*, p. 215.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 306.

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Marcione," as the announcer of a "new eon," i.e., a new era in which man will be able to live "without masters" but "with a community," or, as Bloch put it using a term borrowed from Joachim, "with an empire (*mit Reich*)."[11] This term is important because Joachim's "Third Reich" is considered the direct forerunner of Hitler's. Obviously, in 1918 Bloch could not know about the Nazi's "Third Reich," but in the following years he would say that it was mortgaged directly (through the mediation of Moeller van den Bruck) by Joachim's apocalypse. It is important to point out the remote origins of this trajectory from heresy to Nazism in his 1918 work, in which Bloch had already identified it as going from medieval "heretics" to Dostoyevsky's modernity *sui generis* (i.e., an alternative to Western modernity). Bloch's reconstruction of an *anti-history of the West* culminates in 20th century totalitarianism.

In this sense, *Geist der Utopie* is an attempt to Dostoyevskyize Marx, i.e., to think of a socialism which, by overcoming any positivist legacy, espouses "a Dostoyevskian way of life,"[12] i.e., rediscovers the "underground," the "hidden life" that underlies everyone's rational existence and constitutes the only insurance against the abstract bourgeois world. Thus, in *Thomas Münzer als Theologe der Revolution*, written in 1921 as "a Coda" to *Geist der Utopie*, Bloch reiterates that "the vital impulse of our time" is based on a "secret faith"[13] (this is, once again, an exact interpretation of Dostoyevsky), which, symptomatically, would find in Russia and Germany its realization — a possible "religious revolutionary outcome"[14] (similar to that of Münzer and of the peasant revolts of the 16th century).

In 1921, Bloch expanded his analysis by enriching it with a *mystic tendency* spanning from Joachim of Fiore, through figures such as Eckhart, Huss, Münzer, and Lessing (who picked up directly Joachim's "three epochs"[15]), up to the "mystic humanism of Kant, Weitling, Baader, and Tolstoy." As already indicated, according to Bloch such a tendency will "culminate in Germany and Russia,"[16] i.e., in Bolshevism and, shortly thereafter, in Nazism. In other words, Joachim's heresy culminates in 20th century totalitarian regimes. In 1935, Bloch reformulated his analysis in light of the consolidation of Hitler's regime. Unlike, e.g., Spengler, who spoke of a "fascist age," meaning Nazism as a hyper-modern phenomenon, a result of the rationalization and the mechanization of life, Bloch went back to considering it the result of "medieval ways," of the mysticism of a "'*Volk*' (in its most anti-democratic sense)"[17] — a combination of "coarseness,"

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11. *Ibid.*, p. 272
12. *Ibid.*, p. 333
13. Ernst Bloch, *Thomas Münzer als Theologe der Revolution* [1921] (Frankfurt a/M: Suhrkamp, 1969), p. 227.
14. *Ibid.*
15. *Ibid.*, p. 218
16. *Ibid.*, p. 228
17. Ernst Bloch, *Erbschaft dieser Zeit* (1935), expanded edition (Frankfurt a/M: Suhrkamp, 1962), p. 62

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"primitivisms," "vulgar folklore," etc.[18]

Thus, the Nazi "dream" of a "Third Reich," which was directly modelled on Joachim's "third Evangelium of the Holy Spirit,"[19] was the manifest confirmation of the continuity with medieval mysticism Bloch discussed in his 1935 book. Through Ibsen and again Dostoyevsky, this medieval mysticism would culminate in Moeller van den Bruck, whom Bloch defined as nothing less than a "German Dostoyevsky"[20] that had "transferred to Germany" Dostoyevsky's "strange synthesis between neo-byzantine speculation and Holy Ghost intervention" — all this in the name of a mission of the "elected people," the Russians, "bearers of God."[21] With the Nazis, only the chosen people changed. Now, they were no longer the Russians, but the Germans, although the "mission" remained the same. Moeller "transferred" it in his book *The Third Reich*, which quickly became the Nazi "Bible." In this sense, Nazism was Joachim of Fiore plus Dostoyevsky.

At this point, through the mediation of apocalyptic Russian spiritualism, Bloch developed further the convergence of medieval heresy with 20th century totalitarianism. It was not a matter of extrinsic or forced similarities. Bloch, in fact, maintained that the "myth of the Third Reich" was deeply rooted in the spirit of the German population, in its ancestral memory. Nazism had only evoked those irrational spirits; an "army of assassins" had turned an originally innocuous "myth" into something concrete,[22] so that "a smell of blood" had descended upon German society: a "night full of blood and satanic chaos."[23]

What is really unacceptable in Bloch is his attempt to save the utopian dimension from the Nazi "degeneration," almost as though the European labor movement could bring about its own utopia ("concrete utopia," as he called it), different from the Nazi realization of medieval messianism. This attempt, out of desperation, becomes clear when he tries to show that Hitler's Third Reich does not coincide perfectly with that of Joachim's dream.[24] Bloch put it in such a way as to be able to accuse 19th reformist and positivist socialism of ruining even the memory of the peasant revolts of previous centuries,[25] allowing the Nazis, by now the only heirs to the millenarian tradition, to "steal" this legacy of battles

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18. For a discussion of the "backward" character of Nazism, which also influences its use of science and technology, as opposed to Italian fascism as a *post-modern* regime, see Fabio Vander, *L'estetizzazione della politica* (Bari: Dedalo, 2001), p. 59ff.
19. See Bloch, *Erbschaft dieser Zeit*, *op. cit.*, p. 63.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 64.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 169.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 65.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 139.
24. *Ibid.*, p.145.
25. After Marx, the "utopian dreams," perpetuated "from Thomas More to Weitling," become exhausted, "to be substituted by science." *Ibid.*, p. 150. The Nazis took them up again in the 20th century to gain credibility as new revolutionaries, confronted with a positivist and pseudo-scientific socialism.

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and symbols. "Irrationalism" and "fideism," which Bloch evidently considered to be important values, "have been stolen by the Nazis, as have the red flag, May 1st, and even the hammer and sickle."[26] So, "even the hammer and sickle" were Nazi symbols, cleverly used to lure the masses away from socialism.[27]

These are strong words which, however, reveal Bloch's conviction that Nazism was the only *revolution in the West* — the only translation of Joachim's intuitions in the heart of Europe, after reformist socialists had opted for a disastrous shift "from utopia to science." According to Bodei, the Nazis were better able to address the Western masses than the socialists, and not just workers, but also peasants and the urban middle classes; Nazism had brandished an "anti-capitalistic spirit" thanks to which it "had come to symbolize "the evil of revolution — that revolution which had never taken place in the West."[28]

Even after WWII, Bloch continued to try to "save" heresy and mysticism from the Nazi instrumentalization. As Bodei put it: he sought to "strip Nazi ideology of the element of truth it contained."[29] He will argue that Joachim's "Third Reich" was "the only heretic tradition to have been put to such a wicked use,"[30] to be manipulated by the Nazis. It means that the rest of the heretic tradition can still be recuperated by a Marxism which, having overcome the illusions of reformism, can start to appreciate the value of a more "concrete utopia," and to address social sectors other than the proletariat in the classical Marxist sense, which can be lured away from under the adversary's hegemony.

In what is probably his most famous work, *The Principle of Hope*, Bloch claims that Joachim's doctrine of the "Third Reich" goes further than other heretic and utopian doctrines, in that this Third Reich is envisioned not on distant islands (More's *Utopia*) or in mythological times, but in a "historical future." Utopia *in history*: this was Joachin's decisive step forward. His prophecy of a "mystic democracy" presupposed "a movement of history"[31] which, Bloch maintains, was only achieved in the 20th century; it was certainly "secularized,"[32] but it kept to its basic premises: justice, liberty, and the *societas amicorum*.

The disconcerting conclusion that Bloch reached in the 1950s was that

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26. *Ibid.*, pp. 156-157.
27. As late as in a 1974 interview Bloch maintained that the Nazis have continually stolen the "great revolutionary tradition," and he reiterates that all of this was driven by Joachim's "doctrine of the Third Reich." See Bloch, "Die Welt bis zur Kenntlichkeit verändern," *op. cit.*, p. 64.
28. Bodei, *op. cit*, p. 38.
29. *Ibid.*
30. Ernst Bloch, "Christliche Philosophie des Mittelalters" (lectures delivered between 1950 and 1956), in *Zwischenwelten in der Philosophiegeschichte* (Frankfurt a/M: Suhrkamp, 1977), p. 146.
31. Ernst Bloch, *Das Prinzip Hoffnung* [1959] (Frankfurt a/M: Suhrkamp, 1959), p. 1539.
32. *Ibid.*, p. 598.

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Jaochim's "Third Reich is about to start in the Soviet Union."[33] As if to say that — after the "stolen" Nazi interlude — the USSR was the positive secular realization of Joachim's chiliasm. History has shown what Stalin's "Reich" was all about; what remains of Bloch's work is only the historical-cultural reconstruction. The political part has certainly failed (i.e., the hope of a mystical communism — never realized anywhere, least of all in the USSR), but it constitutes an interesting series of analyses which reveal the authentic nature of 20th century totalitarianism, which touches all the anti-modern currents of European consciousness, from heresy to mysticism, irrationalism, voluntarism, etc. Bloch's merit consists of a reading of Joachim of Fiore, which certainly makes him more topical, but uninteresting, in that it throws light on the ideological genesis of Nazism (the myth of the "Third Reich," Moeller van den Bruck's influence, etc.) and, more generally, points out in the West what socialism *must not be*, i.e., neither a qualified positivism, nor an improbable, and ultimately dangerous, "mystical democracy."

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Autour de Mannheim : Sociologie du savoir Interprétations, détournements, déplacements

Positions, propositions, transpositions (Pierre Lantz). Gérard RAULET, La « querelle de la sociologie du savoir ». ntroduction au texte de Mannheim. Jean-Luc EVARD, L'éclipse double. Karl MANNHEIM, De la concurrence et de sa signification dans le domaine intellectuel [1928]. Michael LÖWY, Nia PERIVOLAROPOULOU, Notes sur la réception de Mannheim en France Nia PERIVOLAROPOULOU, Michel PRAT, Bibliographie des écrits de Karl Mannheim. Jean-Pierre FAYE (interview de) par Rebecca BEHAR, Autour de Nietzsche, Heidegger et Lou Salomé. Jean ZAGANIARIS, Réflexions sur une « intimité » : Joseph de Maistre et Carl Schmitt. Enzo TRAVERSO, De l'anticommunisme : L'histoire du XX[e] siècle relue par Nolte, Furet et Courtois. Pierre LANTZ, À propos du *Siècle des communismes*. Stéphane LE LAY, Une « société civile » à la recherche d'une légitimité politique : à propos de Millau. **Comptes rendus Revue des revues** (Nicole BEAURAIN) **Appel à contributions** ***Abstracts***

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*From the New Left to Postmodern Populism: An Interview with Paul Piccone**

Jorge Raventos

Jorge Raventos: *Between the 1960s and 1980s, both you and* Telos *were regarded as part of the Left — or, rather, of the New Left. Would such a description still be correct today?*

Paul Piccone: Of course, *Telos* came out of the American New Left. To leave it at that, however, would be too simple and maybe even misleading, without first mapping out the internal structure of the New Left in the 1960s to indicate *Telos*' awkward position within it. Such a task is complicated by the fact that most of what has been written on the subject by repentant as well as unrepentant ex-activists only obfuscates, rather than clarifies, what it was all about (see my article "Reinterpreting 1968: Mythology on the Make" in *Telos* 77, Fall 1988, pp. 7-44), for a critique of the self-serving nature of what had been published up to that time). Such a short answer would not explain, for example, why, from the very beginning, *Telos* was always dismissed, if not hated outright by most of the "really existing New Left," and why the journal did not follow the self-destructive trajectory of the movement. Rather, it thrived long after drugs and opportunism reduced the predominant New Left ideologies to rationalizing mechanisms, whose unintended impact was ultimately to reinforce the irrationalities of the very establishment they had sought to transform. In fact, already in the early 1970s, this outcome had been prefigured in the journal through what at that time was called "the theory of artificial negativity" — a formal reconstruction of the logic of the system, extending Herbert Marcuse's analyses of "one-dimensionality," minus its psychoanalytic hallucinations and its lingering Stalinist residues.

Unlike various similar analyses being articulated at the time by, e.g., Michel Foucault, poststructuralism, and even Jürgen Habermas, concerning the obsolescence of subjectivity, the theory of artificial negativity acknowledged its *decline* and progressive disintegration. Instead of celebrating it, the theory of artificial

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* This interview originally appeared in Spanish as "De la Nueva Izquierda al Populismo Posmoderno," in the Argentine journal *Octubre Sudamericano*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (Dec. 2001), pp. 27-50. A shorter version was published in *3 Puntos*, Vol. 5, No. 235 (Dec. 23, 2001), pp. 52-56. Its English version is published here to help clarify the trajectory of some of *Telos*' political positions from its original program in 1968 to the present.

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negativity indicted this process not only as pathological, but as self-destructive, generating the conditions for the system's eventual transformation away from both the mere extension of existing trends and the various alternatives proposed by whatever still remained of an opposition. At the risk of oversimplifying, what this theory stipulates as that logic of the system — the dialectic of enlightenment that results in prioritizing capitalist relations at the expense of all others, the domination of the concept, and the tendentially "totally administered society" — unfolds smoothly only as long as it parasitically relies on the traditional cultural structures it simultaneously seeks to destroy as irrational residues obstructing progress. Without these structures, subjectivity fades, thus depriving the system of that creativity and *élan vital* essential for its effective reproduction. The result is the current paradox: the more this process succeeds, the more it erodes the preconditions for the system's own reproduction, gradually precipitating new and unforeseeable crises.

As these crises unfold, the theory further stipulates that the system will attempt to reconstitute artificially the needed subjectivity (negativity as one of the system's most important internal control mechanisms) through bureaucratic and administrative means. Such a strategy, however, is doomed to fail, to the extent that subjectivity, creativity and negativity cannot be spun out administratively — artificially — without simultaneously becoming extensions of that same apparatus they are meant to rationalize and modulate. The only way out is to roll back the administrative apparatus to allow the natural gestation of "organic negativity" — autonomous individuality — thus reintroducing precisely that subjectivity essential for any self-sustaining social system. This state of affairs, however, exposes the predominant system to challenges it cannot deflect, resulting in radical qualitative changes (that revolutionary *telos* Marx had always regarded as impossible to envision before its actual realization, promising to usher in utopia, but also risking to degenerate, as was often the case in the 20th century, into the horrors of Auschwitz, the Gulag, and Hiroshima).

Without elaborating the theory's full implications, it is obvious why the New Left — or at least those who understood what we were talking about — did not buy it. It not only degraded the activists' role to that of unwitting tools of the system, but, in explaining why in many cases the political establishment even financed it outright through educational institutions and other indirect means, it predicted that the activists' personal future would be in academia and the burgeoning state bureaucracy (as in fact turned out to be the case, at least for those who managed not to self-destruct). Thus, for the New Left, from the very beginning *Telos* was, as Eugene Genovese once described it, a kind of theoretical *Listerine*: necessary, but not very pleasant, and to be spit out as soon as possible. While articulating and developing the best Left theories available in both Europe and the US, *Telos* reached paradoxical political conclusions hard to accept by any of the various groups of what was at the time misleadingly totalized by the media and the culture industry as a unified movement.

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This peculiar state of affairs had to do with the way the New Left developed, out of the Berkeley "free speech movement," opposition to the Viet-Nam war, civil rights demonstrations, etc. — all of this taking place in the background of an entrenched anti-communism, which had severely eroded the normative fiber of almost all major American institutions since the days of McCarthy. On the whole, in the early 1960s there were two major branches within the New Left: one (reformist) committed to making the government live up to traditional American values being violated by everyday institutional practices (freedom of speech, equality, democratic policy-making, etc.); the other (revolutionary) rejecting the so-called "American way of life" as inherently corrupt and functioning essentially as a legitimating ideology for a new imperialism no longer predicated on raw economic exploitation, but on a much more refined political and cultural domination. The reformist wing was made up mostly of the new, loosely organized SDS chapters usually operating independently of each other, while the revolutionaries were primarily the various residual Marxist sects which had managed to survive state repression throughout the 1940s and 1950s. The two never managed to fuse. Any dream of consolidating a unified New Left movement ended suddenly in the Summer of 1969, when the "revolutionary" Marxist sects, seeking to replay the various Leninist scenarios dating back to the Menshevik-Bolshevik split, tried to take over whatever loose organizational framework the SDS and other New Left groups had been able to put together.

From the very beginning, *Telos* sided with the "revolutionaries," not because of any Marxist-Leninist sympathies, but out of an awareness that the traditional American values the reformists wanted to vindicate had long since been seriously compromised by misguided attempts to transform the American political system into something rather different from the original model. Attempts during the second half of the 19th century to transform the American *federal* model (based on self-determination, communitarianism, local autonomy, etc.) into a *national* one, allegedly more suitable to the new socio-economic realities, had resulted in its transformation into a technocratic oxymoron emphasizing centralization of power, planning, rationalization, and professional rule, while still subscribing to traditional American values of individuality, local autonomy, decentralization, etc. To be sure, such a transformation has never been fully carried out and, to this day, the two models — the federal and the national — constantly clash within a contradictory political framework, often in spectacular ways, as in the case of the Oklahoma City bombing (a desperate and misguided political attack against the US government for having usurped and abused power, conveniently degraded to plain "terrorism" by a government — and the terminally conformist media — unwilling to confront the implications of the act) or, more mundanely, in the innumerable jurisdictional squabbles between the Washington bureaucracy and state governments. In terms of concrete policies, this meant that, since anything can follow from contradictory premises, practically any policy could be legitimated, especially in foreign affairs. Not surprisingly, since the Civil

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War the US federal government has been able to act in the most opportunistic and cynical way possible, while at the same time pretending to ground its policies on whichever "national" value could be instrumentalized to legitimate them.

While in the late 1960s *Telos* had yet to develop fully such a critical reading of American history, it had realized that the revisionists' program never had a chance, beyond generating occasional flashes of outraged moralism — as it did against the Viet-Nam war and Southern segregation — while ultimately leaving everything as it was, or worse. The only viable option for a genuine social renewal seemed to be a qualitative axiological renewal, able to restore policy coherence, a social-economic vision, and truly legitimate principles. This placed *Telos* on the "revolutionary" side of the New Left, in the company of the most dogmatic Marxist-Leninists and other fringe elements, with whom, however, it had absolutely nothing in common. We knew all too well that the glorious "working class" was politically irrelevant, Marxist economics was a joke, and that the "Party," at least the way it had developed in the countries of "really existing socialism," was no better than a bunch of gangsters (periodic revelations about the internal functioning of Western political parties, such as operation "Mani Pulite" in Italy, the Kohl-Mitterand affair in Germany, and the various exposés of corruption in practically every political party anywhere, only indicates the extent to which, far from providing an alternative, Marxism-Leninism merely exaggerated the pathologies of bourgeois or liberal-democratic societies). This helps explain why Marxist-Leninists of all stripes always regarded the journal as even more dangerous than run-of-the-mill academic apologists or outright political foes.

Misunderstood by the "revisionists," despised by the "revolutionaries" within the New Left, and with no connection to the predominant academic "discourses" in fashion at the time, *Telos* proposed a systematic re-examination of the trajectory of radical thought during the last century, focusing especially on dissident Marxist traditions that had been repressed by Stalinists and other orthodox Marxists — first and foremost, what Maurice Merleau-Ponty had described as Western Marxism, and what had come to be known as the Frankfurt School. Such a program banished us, politically and theoretically, from all readily recognizable categories and, unintendedly, spared us the bitter fate that befell the New Left, even after such a program became integrated and domesticated as another run-of-the-mill academic sub-discipline of the now fashionable new field of "cultural studies" — precisely as the theory of artificial negativity had predicted.

Jorge Raventos: *Has the Left/Right split become obsolete now or was it always a misleading description? In any case, what rendered it obsolete? Was it globalization?*

Paul Piccone: As political categories, both Left and Right have had different meanings over time and in different countries. In Europe, to the extent that

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traditional conservatism was practically destroyed by the French Revolution and its ideological clones throughout the continent (resulting in the definitive displacement of the feudal order by its bourgeois, "democratic" counterpart), the Left/Right split has actually been a political Trojan horse, concealing an increasingly important series of power struggles, not between capital and labor, but between those with cultural and political capital and those without it. With the traditional Right out of the picture, practically all political projects, including Marxism and later fascism, came about essentially as modernizing programs proposing different ways to rationalize the existing liberal order by depoliticizing social relations and reducing politics to economics.

Since the new mode of domination is predicated not just on economic, but also on *political* and *cultural* power, in order for the rising elite — the New Class of professionals, intellectuals, experts, politicians, etc. — to legitimate itself, it was necessary to translate all political power relations into economic ones, in which the real power brokers present themselves as mere *representatives* of other interests. Thus, today, practically everywhere in the West, Right and Left mean very little and designate, at best, free-marketeers advocating a classical 19th century liberalism predicated on minimal government and unrestricted economic freedom, and statists preferring its 20th century welfare-state version, where the state turns into the most important economic agent and seeks to control and regulate all features of everyday life. This explains why political conflicts have been reduced to administrative squabbles concerning the scope and extent of redistributive policies.

In North America, political relations have developed along rather different lines, but with roughly similar outcomes. Since the US has not had a feudal past and the American Revolution was radically different from the French, the traditional European distinction between a bourgeois Left and an aristocratic Right never made much sense. Only in the 20th century, after the *nationalist* turn following the Civil War, did American politics become comparable to European politics. Before the centralization of political power disrupted the original "American way of life," predicated on communitarianism, localism, self-determination, and loose federal arrangements, it was difficult to categorize existing political parties such as the Whigs, the Federalists, etc. as being either liberal or conservative. At the beginning of the American Revolution, most of the real conservatives (those opposing the break with Britain) moved North to Canada, to live in those territories that had refused to join the rebels and had preferred to remain loyal to the British Crown. Up to the 1860s in the US, there may have been centralizers and autonomists, federalists and anti-federalists, but all sides were dedicated both to "equality" or "liberty" — to use Bobbio's popular, but misleading New Class criteria to distinguish between Right and Left. The fundamental value was an autonomous individuality, secularized directly out of the founding Protestant legacy, emphasizing liberty as the precondition for real political equality, which meant, of course, likely economic inequality as the outcome. The possibility of a powerful,

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redistributive central bureaucracy empowered to curtail freedom, and with practically unlimited fiscal options was unthinkable at the time. After all, the revolution had begun precisely as a tax revolt with the Boston "tea party."

In the late 19th century, the social dislocations brought about by rapid industrialization, urbanization, and, in general, modernity, resulted in a political crisis which paved the way for capital's domination in practically all features of everyday life. Despite New Class ideological recastings of the Civil War as a moral crusade against southern slavery, what was really at stake was the reconfiguration of American society along industrial, rather than agrarian lines — a reconfiguration requiring considerable centralization of political power in Washington, and the systematic marginalization of the states as the basic political entities. As the Lynds showed in their classic work, *Middletown*, these changes eventually resulted in the progressive commodification and quantification of all social relations, further disrupted traditional life-styles, and triggered major political realignments. What became the Left in the modern sense came about at the turn of the century as a result of the mobilization necessary to create a strong "neutral" state administered by the burgeoning New Class to contain and regulate the otherwise all-powerful capital interests. It was meant to protect large sectors of the population — previously independent *artisans* being systematically reduced to dependent *workers* — disempowered by the new economic conditions, in a context in which existing political arrangements (classical liberalism) allowed capital a free hand to do as it pleased. In the classical Marxist scenario, the powerlessness of the new industrial masses translated directly into a need for an American equivalent of the Leninist vanguard party of experts and professionals, alone capable of defending the interests of the increasingly proletarianized masses. Thus, from the very beginning, whatever there was of a Left/Right split in the US was the direct result of the disintegration of the country's political infrastructure, and the main symptom of a spiritual decadence which has yet to run its full course.

From this historical perspective, the Left/Right distinction retains some validity. To reiterate, if today there is any real difference between Left and Right it is in terms of adherence to two different versions of liberalism: the classical, 19th century *laissez-faire* variety versus its 20th century welfare-state version. The first group indulges in nostalgia for a long-gone system *de facto* hostage to dominant capitalist interests (typical of 19th century liberalism), while the second advocates further institutionalization of a *liberal-democratic*, rather than a *republican* society, terminally split between a New Class elite and a clientized populace it routinely mediatizes. But, even in these terms, the distinction makes very little sense today. In the 1960s, after the seemingly irreversible institutionalization of the New Deal, what remained of the American Right was gradually colonized by neo-conservatism: former Left-liberals horrified by the consequences of modernist nihilism and the disintegration of 18th and 19th century American values, as a result of the rise of a powerful culture industry able to

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manipulate consciousness and thus mediate between a globalized mass production and a programmed mass consumption no longer rooted in traditional needs. Despite flashes of libertarian impulses such as the Goldwater presidential bid and the early Reagan Administration's effort to redimension the US government, the American Right remains dominated by a neo-conservative ideology whose kathechontic role is merely to contain the growth of the existing bureaucratic apparatus by deploying the rhetoric of a faded classical liberalism.

What are still identified as Left and Right in the US are very heterogeneous political aggregations comprising a wide variety of conflicting groups. On the whole, the so-called Right (essentially the Republican Party) pretends to defend *traditional* liberal values such as the market, free-enterprise, abstract individualism, autonomy, etc., while the Left (embodied in the Democratic Party) operates within the same ideological orbit, but insists on state controls to prevent the system from self-destructing. In this sense, the Left is even more conservative than the Right in that its state interventionism always claims to defend any feature of public life perceived to be eroded by modernity, globalization, and whatever else threatens them. What makes the distinction even more irrelevant is the electoral logic of the two party system. In order for one of the two parties to win a majority of votes, it has to capture the center, which pushes both parties to propose practically indistinguishable programs. In order not to alienate substantial sectors of the electorate, they avoid at all costs any divisive issue, focusing instead on relatively irrelevant details such as character, style, background, etc. When all is said and done, the differences between the platforms of both parties always tend to reduce to minor quantitative differences.

This helps explain the striking continuity in both US domestic and foreign policies, predicated on a *de facto* depoliticization of the political process, now reduced to a contest between different sectors of the power elite. The crucial issue of the legitimacy of state intervention in social, cultural or economic matters has disappeared from public debate long ago. What remains, at best, is the determination of what, how much, and where should the state intervene. This is why the Bush and Gore platforms were so remarkably close and, not surprising, so were the electoral results.

None of these developments has much to do with globalization — a process already well under-way when Marx and Engels wrote *The Communist Manifesto*. Because of the overwhelming hegemonic power of bourgeois thought that reduces everything to economic relations, today globalization has come to be regarded as the *fons et origo malorum* responsible for practically everything wrong everywhere. This hegemonic power, of course, means that opponents of globalization also operate within the same liberal, ideological universe. Thus, by prioritizing these economic relations over all others, critics remain trapped in the predominant liberal framework, according to which the only solution is effective government intervention on a global level. The paradox here is that, by opposing

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the rationalization of global economic relations, the anti-globalization movement ends up advocating a New Class agenda on a global level, thus extending the same globalization it seeks to prevent, only on different terms. The earlier contraposition of the state to capital in order to contain and regulate it on the national level is now simply being extended globally — and with similar results: the development and expansion of a cosmopolitan New Class.

Within this ideological framework, globalization has become the scapegoat for the failure and inability of particular cultures to resist manipulation by powerful economic interests. Ironically, this scapegoating of globalization is itself part and parcel of the very logic of globalization: the quixotic emphasis on attempts to reverse already *de facto* institutionalized economic realities occludes the primacy of that cultural dimension where the devastating impact of globalization can be buffered and even neutralized.

Jorge Raventos: *Globalization has become such a popular term that it has come to mean very little. How would you define the phenomenon?*

Paul Piccone: There is nothing mysterious about globalization as such. In strictly economic terms, it has to do with the development of an international market — a process that has been going on for a very long time. The only novelty here is the impact that new technologies and modes of communication have had on financial and economic transactions in accelerating global integration. These developments have had a devastating impact primarily on pre-modern cultures that were unprepared and unable to function as the kind of autonomous economic agents presupposed by rational market relations.

However, as Rudolf Hilferding showed almost a century ago, this state of affairs can only be temporary, as these economic imbalances tend to rectify themselves over time as a result of the unfolding of the very logic of capitalism. What is even more important in this respect is the inevitability of a kind of modernization, understood not simply as Westernization or Americanization (as marketed by Hollywood and the rest of the culture industry) but as the gradual constitution of collective economic agents able to compete rationally within a global framework. It means that, whether one likes it or not, the whole world has to conform to the logic of advanced capitalism. This is not strictly an economic question, but primarily a cultural and political one.

Thus, the real problem with globalization *qua* international economic integration has to do, not with participation in the global market (which is unavoidable), but with the preservation and defense of particular cultures. This cannot be done by simply resisting foreign penetration of local markets. More important is the ability to retain cultural integrity, while trying to globalize on one's own terms.

Contrary to the way modernization is usually understood, i.e., as something close to and occasionally even interchangeable with Westernization and Americanization,

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from the viewpoint of those being globalized, rather than that of the globalizers, this implies the creation of the kind of independent political entities able to protect cultural autonomy, while benefiting from participation in the global market-place. In other words, it is not so much the economic impact of globalization *qua* modernization that is a long-range threat to economically weak and marginal societies, but its cultural consequences: the relegation of entire populations to a kind of permanent cultural sub-individuality, deprived of the means to compete effectively in the global market.

The most effective defenses against this Americanization and Westernization are not silly measures such as the French law to prevent English from polluting French, but the strengthening of local traditional cultures whose "rationality," in the age of postmodernity, can no longer be questioned legitimately from the viewpoint of any other culture. The belated acknowledgment of the mythological roots of rationalism has undermined the pretended "superiority" of any culture seeking to universalize its particular myths. *Economic* globalization can be effectively resisted — or at least contained within acceptable parameters — only by preventing *cultural* globalization. Unfortunately, what usually happens is that, in countries other than, for instance, the G-7, a split develops between a ruling New Class elite well integrated within the global economy (and thus committed to that kind of global Americanization needed to sustain existing economic relations), and a populace increasingly Americanized and manipulated by the globalizing culture industry. The result is unaccountability, irresponsible spending policies, and, tendentially, the bankruptcy of these countries, because of onerous national debts incurred by regimes interested primarily in self-aggrandizement and short-term fixes.

This is why opposition to economic globalization is the postmodern equivalent of charging windmills: it reduces the possibility of marginal countries to participate in the world economy — and thus eventually to escape marginalization — while leaving unaffected an Americanized, and increasingly Americanizing populace demanding the cultural products and lifestyles responsible for its dependence. It is not a accident that the final draft of NAFTA, under pressure from the opponents of economic globalization and an army of opportunistic fellow-travellers, has turned out to be a document meant to defend innumerable, politically powerful, particular interests having little to do with genuine free trade. Thus, it has resulted in the further Americanization and trivialization of Canadian culture, the Canadian economy becoming ever more dependent on Wall Street, and Canadian dollars falling increasingly closer to the level of Mexican pesos.

Jorge Raventos: *In your writings you mention frequently the concept "New Class": Could you explain it? Is it simply the bureaucracy or something more? How does the power of this New Class find expressions ideologically and politically?*

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Paul Piccone: The concept of the New Class is hardly new. It has anarchist roots going back to Mikhail Bakunin, who deployed a crude version of it over a century ago to explain the involution of the First International, and Jan Machajsky, who further developed it — in an even more confused form — to criticize social-democracy at the turn of the century. Marx and Engels themselves had already prefigured something along these lines, although it was never developed systematically in their writings. More recently, it was resurrected by Gyorgy Konrad and Ivan Szeleny, but only to explain the development of bureaucratic collectivism in the former Soviet Union and its satellites. Roughly around the same time — the mid-1970s — a new, more theoretically sophisticated version was reintroduced within Western sociology by Alvin W. Gouldner, using linguistics, rather than questionable economic data or the vague power relations underlying earlier formulations, as its main *principium differentiationis*.

Unfortunately, all of these efforts are inadequate, and the concept is now routinely dismissed as yet another effort to recycle and update the long-since discredited Marxist notion of class — a notion that Marx could never formulate satisfactorily, and which in the truncated last chapter of *Capital* remains as a testament to the impossibility to complete Marxism as anything more than a descriptive account of the genesis and structure of liberal capitalism. Thus, even Gouldner's latest version turns out to be analytically and politically useless, to the extent that it is itself predicated on the very same New Class ideology it was meant to expose. Unlike earlier accounts, which dealt with intellectuals and other holders of cultural capital as a rather homogeneous whole, Gouldner distinguished between two conflicting groups within the New Class: *progressive* technocrats and *retrograde* bureaucrats. Allegedly, while the first group is creative, committed to change, and actually responsible for all the benefits resulting from the technological revolution, the latter is parasitic, rule-oriented, and resistant to any changes in the *status quo*. Such a reconfiguration of the concept no longer contraposes the New Class to other social formations, but, in order to understand and explain the dynamics of advanced industrial societies, it automatically assumes the legitimacy of New Class rule and focuses instead on the social impact of the *conflicts* constantly exploding between technocrats and bureaucrats.

Such an account is useless in making sense out of, e.g., the new series of conflicts and crises that have come to characterize post-Cold War realities, and remains stuck in the Enlightenment project of social engineering under the guidance of a New Class elite possessing the superior, universally-valid knowledge legitimating what it considers to be a much needed rationalization of society. Contrary to fundamental Western values predicated on autonomous individuality and self-determination — the axiological horizon within which all contemporary political projects are ultimately modulated — such a posing of the problem of universalist rationalization presupposes as permanent and unproblematic precisely the kind of new social divisions and conflicts that the concept was meant to explain.

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Consequently, it fails to thematize, e.g., the status of *intellectuals* and of the hyper-professionalization of knowledge as a pathological predicament of modernity, presupposing a division between "experts" with access to universal knowledge and values (thus able to plan and make decisions), and a clientized populace to be managed and manipulated — even if, presumably, in its own best interests.

The exclusive emphasis on conceptual knowledge hypostatizes formal rationality as the only legitimate mode of apprehending reality, and checkmates as "irrational" those alternative, intuitive, and generally informal modes of being which makes everyday life meaningful and manageable to ordinary people with no intellectual or professional pretenses. The result is nihilism and a progressive social disintegration. Without traditional cultural bonds, which automatically provide individuals with personal identity, meaning, and readily-available means to process everyday problems, life becomes increasingly difficult to negotiate, requiring ever more frequent interventions by professionals, experts, etc., thus further legitimating New Class hegemony over all features of everyday life. In this sense, the concept of the New Class encapsulates the predicament of modernity: what the Marxist tradition identified as the problem of "alienation" (but mistakenly reduced and relegated to relations of production), and Heidegger, Schmitt — and most of the inter-wars "conservative revolutionaries" in Germany — misleadingly attributed to "technology," understood as the degradation of human to mere mechanical functions. The resulting institutional paternalism, which the Frankfurt School blamed for the working class' proclivity to follow authoritarian regimes, also helps explain the growing economic inequality and salary differentials between New Class professionals and everyone else.

The extent of New Class ideological hegemony, neatly marketed as a neutral liberalism claiming to embody the allegedly universally valid principles of the Enlightenment, is reflected by the lack of any substantial opposition to it. In addition to abstract individuality and formal equality, today professionalism, the epistemological primacy of instrumental rationality, and what Adorno called "identity logic," remain the predominant dogma. One does not have to recycle Gaetano Mosca's theory of "circulating elites" to realize the extent to which entrenched bureaucracies and technocracies remain in power, no matter what other changes there are with the alternating of democratically elected administrations. The Civil Service transcends democratic prerogatives and even extreme radical shifts such as, e.g., the changes from fascist to communist regimes in Eastern Europe after WWII, did not threaten the institutional permanence of most technocrats and bureaucrats — at least, among those who were neither shot or hung. The old US Army joke that old irrelevant documents can be destroyed only after they have been copied in duplicate applies even more to the New Class ruling apparatus. Despite Ronald Reagan solemn promise to reduce the bureaucracy and the innumerable regulations, they thrive. During his administration both actually grew.

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The New Class is not a "class" in the Marxist sense of its relation to the means of production, but only in a general, metaphoric sense, describing those people with cultural capital (knowledge), using such capital to secure a privileged social position with respect to those who lack it. To the extent that these power relations can be maintained only by privileging formal rationality and universal values, while dismissing other preconceptual modes of being as irrational or, at best, pre-rational, the New Class demands the exhaustive codification of all of reality as a precondition for its very recognition as such, thus legitimating its particular skills as essential to access it. The institutionalization of this artificial predicament paves the way not only for the huge salary differences between the New Class and those lacking cultural capital, but also for the disempowering of all those unable to negotiate their way through the new professional communication networks within which universality obtains. This social fracture, obtaining not only at the local, but also at the global level, generates a kind of inequality much more pervasive than anything the old capital ever succeeded in creating, and much more difficult to expose, confront politically, and eventually reverse.

Jorge Raventos: *In your thought, and in* Telos *in general, there is a strong defense of federalism, in terms of autonomy of people and communities before centralist government. Can you define the concept of federalism and the political role you assign to it? How can federalism operate as an organizational tool for wider communities in the age of globalization?*

Paul Piccone: Contrary to its original meaning — as a system meant to guarantee local autonomy and self-determination, within a context in which some limited prerogatives are allotted to a central government created specifically to deal with common problems — today federalism refers primarily to the centralization of power. A system devised specifically to guarantee the cultural particularity of the political units constituting the federation has been turned into its opposite, where the central government increasingly regards the various units as nothing more than transmission belts to implement the center's mandates. This reversal of meaning is a perfect example of how the New Class exercises its hegemony in order to redefine reality in its own image.

Despite a great deal of resistance at the local level, this substitution of a centralized for a decentralized system has been going on for a long time. In fact, it is still unfinished and, in the US, it remains the source of constant friction between the central government and the states. What has made it possible, among other things, is the successful deployment of New Class ideology: a managerial liberalism far different from its classical 19th century counterpart. By contraposing a central government predicated on allegedly neutral values, scientific knowledge, and rationality, to local communities bound only by particular traditions, customs, religion, dialects, etc., the New Class has progressively delegitimated the

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latter — usually by instrumentalizing crises whenever they occur — thus paving the way for the central government usurpation of most functions which were originally meant to remain local prerogatives.

What has facilitated this process is an unresolved ambiguity within the US Constitution, where the Bill of Rights empowers the federal government to enforce it, thus practically deactivating the 10th Amendment that stipulates a limitation of federal prerogatives to explicitly spelled out tasks. Combined with the federal government's powerful fiscal clout and its ability to coerce the states into submission with the threat to withhold funding, the hypostatization of rights over all other concerns has meant that, for all practical purposes, the US operates as a centralized nation rather than as a federation.

The vindication of the original meaning of federalism in *Telos* has always been connected with the critique of representative democracy as insufficiently democratic, and with the need to have direct democracy operative, at least at the lowest levels of decision-making. By sharply separating a knowledgeable political elite of New Class experts from an increasingly alienated and therefore incompetent populace, representative democracy falls prey to private interests able to finance and indirectly control the political system. In this sense, the Marxist critique of bourgeois democracy as tendentially a tool of capitalism has always been more or less on the mark. Without a competent citizenry able and willing to hold its representatives accountable, the latter become accountable only to those private interests that support them. What is especially problematic with this system is that, far from being self-correcting, it tends to increase the distance between representatives and those allegedly being represented, resulting in an ever more undemocratic New Class regime.

Exactly the same process is replicated at the global level, with equally debilitating consequences. Despite the fact that the solution they usually propose — world-government — may be worse than the problem, opponents of globalization are concerned precisely with this lack of democratic accountability. Whether generalizing federalism on a regional or global level is possible or even at all desirable is hard to determine, since the financial powers that run the world economy are not readily susceptible to political controls. It is obvious, however, that the institutionalization of a federalism predicated on strict subsidiarity — and thus ultimately based on grass-root direct democracy — within particular countries would make it easier to translate such practices to a broader framework. And, clearly, this framework would be preferable to the present one, where the UN human rights ideology concealing US national interests seeks to homogenize the whole globe in the image the American New Class has of itself and of how the whole world should be.

Jorge Raventos: *Is your concept of federalism only linked to the idea of autonomous communities sharing a common space, or does it also*

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include the type of autonomy of functional communities (factory workers, unions) and small independent organizations (mutual help societies, cooperative buyers' societies)? In any case, what similarities and differences do you see in those fields for federalist ideas?

Paul Piccone: What you are describing is not *federalism*, but *corporatism*. While there are broad similarities between the two, they are not the same. Corporative entities are not communities in the strict sense, but more like voluntary associations competing and/or cooperating in the so-called public sphere in order to defend their members' interests. Historically associated exclusively with fascism, corporatism has in fact become the normal *de facto* organizational structure of all advanced industrial societies, irrespective of their self-description as liberal-democratic, social-democratic, socialist, communist, etc. In a context in which democratic elections have deteriorated to the level of spectacular legitimating rituals for competing groups of New Class elites, the only way to administer effectively a modern society is by modulating the demands and needs of various corporative bodies. Even federations based on communities small enough to practice direct democracy have to deal with whatever particular voluntary associations or interest groups or, more generally, corporate bodies they contain within them.

Unlike corporative entities, in which participation is contingent and does not permanently define personal identities, communities define individuals in an irrevocable way. One does not choose one's parents, race, place of birth, native language, religion, etc. in the way one takes a job in a particular factory, joins a union or any number of possible voluntary associations — nor is it possible to change one's genetic make-up, parents, or history. While these corporative structure can come and go, communities do not, unless under catastrophic circumstances. This also explains why it is so important to defend their cultural particularity. In other words, communities and voluntary associations operate on different levels, which helps explain why New Class ideology welcomes the latter, but tries to systematically erode and homogenize the former. Communities become political entities when they so define themselves, while voluntary associations always remain, at best, economic agencies with or without some political clout as pressure groups. Communities can form a federation if they so choose; corporative bodies can only demand recognition and satisfaction of their demands within whatever political system is in place.

Jorge Raventos: *You defend populism. Because in Argentina it has been associated with the Peronist movement, that term has been despised and demonized from several sides: the liberals, academia, as well as the Left. What is your definition of populism?*

Paul Piccone: The demonization of populism is not a phenomenon limited

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to Argentina. Populism is hated and misunderstood all over the world, especially by the New Class and academics, who immediately associate it with fascism and other authoritarian regimes. The problem with this association is that populism is usually a reaction against democratic deficits and is always much more democratic than any system based on representative democracy. With the possible exception of Russian populism, populist movements generally come about in particular historical junctures when the democratic process has degenerated so much that it calls forth a truly democratic reaction. Since reactions of this kind are never articulated and mediated by intellectuals able to reconfigure them within coherent and "rational" frameworks, they end up including all sorts of "politically incorrect" views about racism, immigration, religion, etc. As a result, they are either demonized and dismissed as irrational and fascist, or, under the pretext of representing populist interests, they are successfully instrumentalized to legitimate collectivist New Class projects such as the New Deal.

It is amazing how otherwise serious academics that study populism, such as Margaret Canovan, Yannis Papadopoulos, and even Pierre-André Taguieff invariably preface their analysis with disclaimers that the term "populism" is ambiguous, contradictory, or too vague to handle, and, on further reflection, also concede that similar terms such as "democracy," "federalism," and practically every other fundamental concept in political discourse is equally problematic. This instinctive New Class phobia is due to the fact that populism is anti-intellectual in the sense that it rejects the distinction between intellectuals and non-intellectuals, whereby the former rule and the latter follow. In a truly democratic fashion, they demand that everyone be considered equally qualified to participate in the kind of decisions affecting their life. Consequently, even the most outrageous views manage to be expressed and sometimes adopted as part of particular political projects.

This, unfortunately, is the price one must pay for *real* democracy unfettered by liberal dogmatism defining *a priori* what is acceptable and what is not, down to castigating minitiae such as second hand smoke, "insensitivity" toward any particular social group, or even entertaining sexual fantasies about anyone under age is a crime — not to mention the use of alcohol, drugs, etc. If democracy is self-correcting — and it is so by definition, if no external values are hypostatized above and beyond it — then all of these pathologies or pseudo-pathologies will automatically be rectified in the normal course of events. Ultimately, populism seeks to vindicate particularistic cultural values which, if they need to be defended in such an explicit fashion, have either degenerated to what, from an external perspective appears as a pathological level, or are threatened by developments difficult to contain by normal means. In either case, populism is always a symptom of a crisis of democracy and self-determination.

Jorge Raventos: *Lately, in cultural and political debates and in the media there has been a new censorship, under the form of political*

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correctness: there are some subjects which can only be mentioned euphemistically or prefaced with negative comments, while others cannot be mentioned at all. What is the cause of this political correctness? Is it an American or European phenomenon or is it a transnational one?

Paul Piccone: Political correctness is just another name for a very old phenomenon: dogmatism. If one thinks he has access to "truth," all other alternative accounts can only appear as errors, sins, or crimes. All religions — and the kind of cultures that they generate — fall into this category. The Taliban and, to a much less extent, Muslims in general, are only an extreme expression of this phenomenon. Because of the secularization brought about by the development of the modern state following the religious wars in the 17th century, in the West today religions have been privatized and relegated to a pre-political domain. The modern state has managed to contain and depoliticize the kind of dogmatism that centuries earlier had resulted in the Crusades, the slaughtering of infidels, and scores of other barbarities committed in the name of the one and only Truth. Of course, the slaughtering stopped only in the West. Colonialism and imperialism continued the trend well into the 20th century, as can be readily documented by the Belgian experiences in the Congo and much of the history of Western penetration of Latin America and Asia.

As long as no one else was harmed by some particular practices, classical liberalism, at least in theory, defended primarily liberty and tolerance. When the growing demand for social services and state intervention into economic relations paved the way for a massive growth of the central government — and the empowerment of the New Class needed to run it — classical liberalism gradually changed into managerial liberalism. While previously the main concern was with liberty and with preventing the resulting free activities from harming other people, the managerial state came to emphasize equality and even potential harm to oneself — since the state now would have to bear the cost of the consequences of any deviant behavior. Responsible for the welfare of all, the interventionist state penetrated practically every aspect of everyday life in order to insure conformity with the kind of abstract individualism and formal rationality it presupposes as preconditions for social well-being. This meant that what previously functioned as mere regulatory guidelines were gradually turned into the kind of absolute values underlying traditional religions and, at the same time, generating the secular equivalent of the kind of dogmatism classical liberalism was originally meant to marginalize. Political correctness is the form this dogmatism takes within managerial liberalism.

In extreme cases, anything threatening the dogma of equality — now not just formal but also substantial — becomes anathema, and what before could have been dismissed as mere wrong views are now demonized and even criminalized. In some European countries it is a crime to *question* whether the Holocaust ever took place; in the US it is absolutely taboo to hint that racial differences are not just skin-deep,

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and particular cultural values such as patriarchy or others stipulating qualitatively different gender roles are demonized. Political correctness does not stop at demonizing overt behavior or particular opinion; it extends even to personal feelings. So-called "hate" laws seek to homogenize internal psychological states with moral injunctions and legal strictures resembling those of the Spanish Inquisition.

The disproportionate passion and almost fanatical fervor of those advocating political correctness can only be explained in religious terms. Especially in countries with a rigorous Protestant or Puritan past, which have undergone rapid secularization following modernity, such as the US and most of Northern Europe, liberalism in general and political correctness in particular become the rational substitutes for the kind of dogmatic religions now discarded as superstition and myth. This helps explain why, for example, it is hard to find much political correctness in Latin America or Southern Europe, where Catholicism is still predominant. Unfortunately, to the extent that it is part and parcel of the predominant human rights ideology being imposed by the US- and UN-sponsored New World Order, it is beginning to spread in these countries as well. Of course, opposition by fanatical sects such as the Taliban is ultimately counterproductive, at least to the extent that it helps legitimate the very ideology they reject.

Jorge Raventos: *What do you think of the cultural and political debates in the US? Where do you see the strongest signs of vitality?*

On the cultural front, the most intensely debated issue by far is multiculturalism. But the terms of the debate are distorted and both those in favor and those opposed to multiculturalism remain caught in the web of a managerial liberalism concerned primarily with preserving existing social relations — even at the cost of having to change everything, as the old French proverb goes. Under the pretense of respecting cultural autonomy within a pluralist society, this policy is actually a "new and improved" version of the old assimilationist strategy.

The US was *de facto* multicultural up to WWI, even if this multiculturalism remained submerged within an overwhelming WASP cultural hegemony. The concerted effort to homogenize the culturally heterogeneous populations concentrated primarily in large urban settings, their "Americanization," began only after it became obvious that such populations did not meet the requirements of the new national market predicated on Fordist mass production and mass consumption. Only a homogeneous population with similar cultural references, needs, and desires could produce and consume the standardized mass produced commodities. Thus, for advertisement to work, it was necessary to be able to appeal to referents known to all: no peasant with only a rudimentary knowledge of English could be persuaded, e.g., to drink Coca-Cola, by subliminally promising the enhancement of one's virility.

This Americanization strategy worked all too well, but it also had serious unintended consequences related to the cultural disintegration it precipitated.

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Reduced to its lowest possible denominator, American culture reduced to mere consumption of whatever commodities were being effectively marketed: certainly no substitute for the rich, traditional cultures the first and second generation immigrants were supposed to leave behind. The collapse of American cities (largely as a result of social engineering), the increases in criminality and other social dysfunctions made it clear that such a policy was ultimately self-defeating. Fortunately, in the meantime technology had developed enough to allow market segmentation and the kind of diversified production it required. In other words, in the post-WWII period it became clear that Americanization *qua* homogenization was obsolete. It could have been carried out even more effectively by vindicating cultural specificity, within the broad framework of managerial liberalism.

Thus, multiculturalism came into being as a way to assimilate minorities and ethnic groups, not as formally identical to everyone else, but as minorities and ethnic groups. The question of a common culture is irrelevant. The culture industry is ubiquitous and continues to homogenize everyone by integrating whatever cultural particularity it find expeditious to instrumentalize. Within this ineliminable horizon, the integration of other cultures as other cultures only helps create a multicultural New Class which, by pretending to preserve traditional cultures doomed to terminal erosion, actually retards the effective integration of minorities and immigrants. In this sense, the multicultural debate is between neo-conservative New Class ideologues attempting to uphold a vision of America that never existed in order to inflate their particular cultural capital, and multicultural wannabe New Class members seeking to inflate their own cultural capital at the expense of the particular groups they claim to represent. None of this has had any significant impact on American culture other than multiculturalizing TV and mass advertisement at a time when the computer culture and multi-media developments are rendering both increasingly irrelevant. Within academia, it remains primarily an academic debate about jobs, promotions, and the creation of ever sillier programs leading nowhere.

Politically, w hatever de bates were t here a bout t he direction o f American society, its character, etc. have been marginalized by the prosperity of the 1990s. All that remains today is, at best, negotiations between the two main factions of the New Class about the extent and scope of government redistributive policies: the extent of the tax-cut, how to reorganize education, which new programs to fund, etc. Other issues, such as stem cell research, are beyond the comprehension of most people and, at best, are reduced to simplistic positions about the sanctity of life or political non-interference with scientific research — although, strictly speaking, this issue too was about whether and to what an extent should the federal government fund such research.

Broader issues dealing with globalization, environmental standards, and economic growth simply do not generate major political debates, unless explicitly sponsored by some particular lobby, as in the case of the Middle East, where it usually comes down to the extent of American aid and support of Israel. Relations

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with China, the containment of Iran and other allegedly "rogue countries," negotiations with Russia about nuclear arms reduction, drug enforcement, immigration, discrimination, etc. still make the headlines of major newspapers and are regularly reported by other media, but they are usually forgotten as soon as the reporting stops. At best, they only engage a tiny minority of intellectuals with a professional interest in the particular subjects.

The kind of prosperity made possible by the technological revolution during the past decade and the collapse of any significant geopolitical opposition to US cultural and political hegemony has had the impact of a narcotic on American politics, now more than ever concerned with purely local or regional issues: housing, crime, traffic, etc. The current depoliticization in the US is not all that different from a similar phenomenon during the Brezhnev years in the former Soviet Union — a period an increasing number of older Russians are coming to regard as "the good old days." As long as the regime can guarantee an acceptable standard of living, broader political issues fade from public consciousness.

Despite all this, the US remains a vibrant society with a very bright future, much more so than any other comparable country. The constant flow of immigrants — usually the best and the most enterprising part of the population of their native countries— revitalizes American society and regenerates a sense of purpose it would otherwise lose. The American ability to control the international division of labor has led to a concentration of decision-making power which reduces the rest of the world to a status of cultural, economic and political dependence. For better or worse, the US is bound to remain the engine of world history for the foreseeable future. In light of the potential problems with other alternatives, this may not be the worst of all possible scenarios. What kind of impact this state of affairs has and will continue to have on the rest of the world, of course, depends on the particular countries in question.

Jorge Raventos: *There is now a debate going on concerning the project of a common American free trade zone from Alaska to Tierra del Fuego. Do you think this will encourage more cultural and political interaction between the US and South America?*

Paul Piccone: It all depends on what one means by "free trade zone." If it is something like NAFTA, then it will only perpetuate or intensify existing problems and misunderstandings. Despite the "free-trade" label attached to it, NAFTA is, at best, a bureaucratic nightmare, catering to innumerable private interests and creating even more obstacles to free trade than before it went into effect (except, of course, for those commercial interests with enough political clout to influence the final draft of the agreement). For example, there is no real rational justification for maintaining a border between the US and Canada, were it not for protecting particular interests on both sides and upholding a spurious sense of cultural and political

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difference. The present Administration's effort to rationalize economic relations with Mexico is a step in the right direction, but even in this particular case it is immediately obvious what kind of almost insurmountable political obstacles lay on the way. If, by manipulating their local political representatives, the Teamsters' Union was able to checkmate minimalist efforts to loosen restrictions on Mexican trucks entering the US, one can only imagine the particularistic domestic objections to even greater relaxation of border restrictions.

To be sure, changes of this magnitude cause major disruptions at all levels. Yet, the eventual benefits by far exceed the price paid for them — especially for Latin America. Such a development is not qualitatively different from the European Union's eventual integration of East and Central European countries. Not only would it bring immediate economic benefits to South America, but, as has been the experience of South European countries, e.g., Portugal, Spain and Greece, after they joined the European Union, such an integration would be a major catalyst in rationalizing the often bizarre legal and bureaucratic structure of the countries involved. If this economic arrangement were to work, the eventual standardization of the currency should also reap benefits for all countries involved. Unlike the fate the German Mark suffered in the process of becoming homogenized within the Euro, because of its massive international presence, the US dollar would be hardly effected. After initial disruptions, Latin American currencies would also benefit by achieving the kind of stability they desperately need.

As for the cultural impact on the US, it would help defrost the Puritan residues still deeply buried within American collective consciousness, and enrich, even more than has already been the case with Mexican immigration in Western states, what outsiders still perceive to be a rather parochial and self-centered American culture. Already flooded by the North American culture industry, Latin American culture would not lose any more of its particularity than it already has, and would lose anyway, whether or not it participates in a free-trade zone. On the positive side, through economic integration with North America, of course, Latin America would immediately find itself in a stronger position *vis-à-vis* the rest of the world.

Traditional nation-states have already lost much of their sovereignty, and the critics of globalization are right in predicting an even greater erosion in the future. Calls by some of them for a world government as the solution, however, would probably make things worse and actually unmanageable — even if such a global political structure were to be a loose federation not much stronger than the current UN. Intermediate solutions such as common free-trade zones, which Carl Schmitt saw already institutionalized, if only *in nuce* and with explicit imperialist objectives, with the Monroe Doctrine, are a much better alternative. But this discussion may be already beside the point, since globalization, for better or worse, is already precipitating this kind of integration. To organize it consciously, rather than leave it to the whims of financial flows, may reduce the unavoidable disruptions it creates while facilitating the development of mutually beneficial cultural ties.

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Le Pen's Legacy

Russell A. Berman

When incumbent French President Jacques Chirac trounced his right-wing challenger Jean-Marie Le Pen in the second round presidential voting on May 5, the French political establishment was delighted. Attacked as a dangerous extremist and an opponent of European integration, Le Pen was soundly rejected by the voters. Nonetheless, the election results highlighted deep-seated problems in French political culture. Chirac's victory means less than his supporters imagine, and Le Pen's defeat by no means eliminates the issues that catapulted him to center stage.

Most observers were surprised when Le Pen came in second in the first round of the two-stage presidential vote in late April, outpolling and thereby eliminating the favored candidate, socialist Lionel Jospin. Influential parts of the French public reacted with shock and dismay. How could Le Pen, regularly denounced as a racist and "fascist," even be allowed a run for presidenty? The prospect was all the more embarrassing, since it had been France that had led the European boycott of Austria, after the right-wing Freedom Party of the populist Jörg Haider was able to join the government in Vienna. Now, a comparable right-winger had a shot at the top job in Paris. But with the reassuring results of the second round, the French could heave a sigh of relief. All was forgiven. They had defeated "fascism." The Republic was saved. Or so it seemed.

The size of Chiracs' victory was certainly impressive. With his nearly 82% of the votes, he even trumped a historical giant, Louis Bonaparte who, in 1848, had garnered a paltry 75.1%. And he well outran Georges Pompidou, who won a pale 58.2% in 1969. Since the press had described Le Pen's first round surprise as an "earthquake," surely Chirac's definitive results deserve to be treated as a landslide.

To be sure, Chirac has been reelected, and winning is what counts, but on second look the numbers tell a different story. Despite his second round embarrassment of riches, in the first round, Chirac had only been able to garner a mere 19.88%. In other words, less than one out of every five French voters had much enthusiasm for him. The situation is actually even worse, in light of the high absenteeism: Chirac only received first-round support from 13.75% of the registered voters — not a breath-taking expression of confidence, and hardly any sort of mandate.

In fact, the presidential campaign leading up to the first round did not impress the bored and disinterested public. Important issues were not addressed, the major candidates lacked charisma, and the absentee rate was the highest in French history. Only the shock of seeing the pariah Le Pen enter the second round brought

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out the public, first in a series of coordinated demonstrations and then at the polls. During this second phase, all the mainstream press regularly ran headlines opposing Le Pen, and even the public schools encouraged students to join anti-Le Pen demonstrations. Note: they did not encourage students to debate the issues or to compare the candidates as a lesson in civic duty; instead, students were pointed toward opposing the right-wing Le Pen as the sole acceptable option.

Chirac's superficial landslide therefore had next to nothing to do with a genuine popularity, and everything to do with the manipulated mobilization of the electorate against his opponent. Chirac won because Le Pen had to lose, and this half-hearted support may quickly limit his ability to lead, as will other legacies of the campaign. In particular, he owes his "landslide" to support from his natural opponents on the Left, and the Left, in turn, is sure to argue that Chirac should defer to its agenda, because of its role in his victory.

Moreover the election reminded the public of the scandals hovering over Chirac, dating back to his years as Mayor of Paris. Allegations abound that he was involved in a system of kickback payments linked to municipal contracts. Investigations were halted because, as President, he was granted immunity. Office has its benefits. Had he lost the election, court proceedings would have begun. Hence, the popular slogan during the campaign: "Vote for the crook, not for the fascist," i.e., for Chirac, and not Le Pen. This is not an auspicious reputation with which to start a new term as President.

French culture has a deep fascination with strong leaders, dating back to the monarchy and the empire. But contemporary European political systems are less and less capable of generating politicians of stature. As nation-states dwindle into bureaucratic adminstrations of social programs, and as they cede sovereignty to the European Union, vibrant political leadership on the national level becomes unlikely. The enormous size of Chirac's vote count cannot hide the systemic limits on his political latitude or the mixed blessings hidden in his scores.

Ironically, Chirac's biggest challenge may be the legacy of his opponent. Despite the defeat, Le Pen racked up the highest right-wing vote ever, while expanding support into new regions such as rural France. Among blue collar workers, he was the clear winner, evidence of his populist, rather than traditionally conservative cast.

Le Pen was handicapped by his sometimes acrimonious manner and a controversial personal history. But the questions he posed, similar to those cropping up across Europe, have had strong voter appeal and will certainly influence French politics for some time to come. Chirac may have won the votes, but Le Pen won the battle of ideas by defining key political issues. On top of the list is crime or, as it is called in France, "security," a euphemism for the lack of the same. The French public is clamoring for improved law and order. It was Le Pen who forced this topic into the campaign. Waves of bank robberies, car-jackings, and shootings have come to characterize French life, in addition to the endemic

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pickpocketing in public transportation and tourist sites (Note to Paris visitors: abandon all valuables, ye who enter the Metro). A report last year indicated that French crime rates had surpassed those in the US, one competition with America that the French would prefer not to be winning.

The call for "security" overlaps with the question of immigration, since much of the crime is perceived to have to do with immigrant, largely Arab populations. Despite France's relatively liberal immigration policy (in contrast to the much more restrictive tradition in Germany), immigrants have not been integrated, but are typically concentrated in ghettoes surrounding the core of Paris. A stultifying political correctness has prevented a frank discussion of immigration. Not surprisingly, voter support for Le Pen frequently tracked local rates of immigrant populations. In France, as in much of Europe, a reconsideration of immigration policy is being forced by a wave of populist resistance, because the governing elite has turned a blind eye.

In France and across Europe, the growth of immigration has raised questions about national identities. But national identity faces another challenge from the supranational structures of the European Union, a third key theme for Le Pen. Power is shifting rapidly from nation-states to bureaucrats in Brussels, largely shielded from political accountability. Le Pen gave voice to widespread concerns about the character of this "Europeanization." In England, for example, Le Pen's stance would be called a "Euroskepticism," a legitimate part of the political spectrum. But in France, Le Pen's opponents were able to paint him as an extremist, because of his doubts about the European Union.

Le Pen tried to underscore that he was not against Europe, but only against the bureaucratic form that the European Union has taken. However, he staked out a too radical position by promising a return to the franc. After the relatively untroubled transition to the Euro, few voters are eager to go back to the national currency. Le Pen is not always his own best ally or tactician.

Le Pen has a documented history of minimizing the Holocaust, and he has been accused of anti-Semitism. During the campaign, he tried to live down that past, including via interviews in the Israeli press. Be that as it may, France is currently witnessing a wave of anti-Semitic violence, emanating from the immigrant Arab communities: juvenile delinquents, inspired by Islamic radicals to carry the Palestinian *intifada* into France, which is home to the largest Jewish community in Europe. Questions about anti-Semitism in France should not be directed primarily at Le Pen but at the perpetrators of this violence, their supporters on the Left, and a government unwilling to guarantee the security of all its citizens.

Le Pen has defined central issues for French politics, and Chirac has his work cut out for him. If he does not do it well, Le Pen is sure to be back, or perhaps a successor to Le Pen, more skilled at public relations, and with less biographical baggage. One way or another, France will not be able to continue to avoid addressing problems of crime, immigration, and a bureaucratic "Europe."

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Reviews:

Lincoln Symbols

Barry Schwartz, *Abraham Lincoln and the Forge of National Memory* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 367 pp., Hardcover $27.50

This book is a study of symbols commemorating Lincoln from his death to 1922, when the Lincoln Memorial was dedicated in Washington. It is different from other studies, such as Merrill Peterson's exhaustive survey of Lincoln symbols,[1] in that it seeks to understand why and how Lincoln emerged during the Progressive era as one of the most venerated national symbols. But this is not all the study sets out to do. Schwartz claims to have worked out a theory of collective memory that is superior to that of its contemporary rivals. In so doing, he provides an extensive survey of the literature on commemorative memory and offers insightful criticisms.

Schwartz seeks to refute what he calls the "constructionist" theory of commemorative memory, exemplified in the work of Eric Hobsbawn, Terence Ranger, John Bodnar, and many others. In this theory, commemorative symbols are inventions political regimes use to reinforce their authority. As political changes occur in the present, new pasts are invented and new symbols are devised to commemorate them. Commemorative memory is an effective weapon in contemporary power struggles. Schwartz argues convincingly that this view is correct as far as the causes and consequences of commemorative images goes, but that it leaves out the importance of culture. Commemorative images are *symbols* through which experience — political and otherwise — is expressed and apprehended. They *reflect* reality by interpreting the past in terms of present interests; they *shape* reality by providing people with a program in terms of which their present lines of conduct can be formulated and enacted; and they *frame* reality through standards in terms of which the effectiveness and moral excellence of their conduct can be known. So understood, commemorative symbols are not constructions of power elites, but have moral, cognitive, and ontological meaning. They are "objective" and "superpersonal."

As Schwartz points out, upon his death Lincoln was not admired by most of

1. Merrill D. Peterson, *Lincoln in American Memory* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).

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Northern society. His sudden death in a context of crisis and confusion elevated his stature. "The mourning ritual alone impressed his image on the public mind." Political and commercial entrepreneurs immediately began to manufacture a cult of commemorative biography, poetry, painting, shrines, and rituals. Northerners were silent in criticism of this cult, but few accepted it. Only in the early 20th century did Lincoln surpass Washington as America's idol. America had become a more urban industrial place, generating new problems and new ideals of democracy and human welfare. These ideals were spiritualized into an image of Lincoln as a "man of the people," the friend of economic reform, labor, feminism, blacks, and Southerners. Commemorative rituals for the 1909 centennial of Lincoln's birth expanded his reputation. In this way, Lincoln integrated and democratized America.

During WWI, Lincoln's image was used to clarify the purpose of the war; to legitimate the loss of liberty and the centralization of power and resources needed to wage it, and to mobilize and console the people who fought it. The bellicose moralism that animated the conquering Lincoln was a good model for the war to end all wars and to make the world safe for democracy. But the image of Lincoln as a moralistic Caesar is not entirely at home with the image of the humble rail splitter and man of the people. In a splendid discussion of three case studies, Schwartz shows how the tension reached a climax during the Progressive era and WWI. Each involved a debate about how Lincoln should be remembered. A statute was to be sent to London. Would it be the Augustus Saint-Gaudens Lincoln, who is a rich, refined bourgeois manager of men and things? Or the George Grey Barnard Lincoln, who has just walked into town from the farm needing a haircut and wearing trousers a bit too short? A similar debate arose over the "restoration" of Lincoln's log cabin birthplace, the question of building a marble temple to commemorate it, and over the design of the Lincoln Memorial. These contrary Lincolns — the humble folk hero and the epic imperialist hero — Schwartz argues, exemplify the tension within the American heroic experience.

How does Schwartz's account of collective memory avoid the errors of constructionism? He admits that the elevation of Lincoln's historical reputation was a deliberate act of the Progressive era. But he denies that it was merely the construction of elites for political purposes. During this period, there was more agreement than disagreement among Americans on the basic questions of national history and identity. Political entrepreneurs were limited by what the audience would accept. Lincoln entrepreneurs worked hard to make him an idol shortly after his death, but failed to impress the members of Lincoln's own generation. The Progressives did not "construct" Lincoln, nor did they discover new facts about him; rather, in a period of rapid social transformation, they discovered new facts about themselves and their condition, and regarded Lincoln as the perfect vehicle for giving these tangible expression. They could do this because Lincoln and they shared political-structural continuities and deep cultural continuities. It would be more correct to say that the Progressives magnified aspects of Lincoln's life that

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earlier or later eras had not, and perhaps could not have seen as vividly.

The constructionists rightly see that collective memory is and must be anchored in present interests. Its error is "to underestimate the present's carrying power by failing to recognize that the same present can sustain different memories and that different presents can sustain the same memory." Thus, the original egalitarian image of Lincoln was preserved along with the later Caesarean image, because American society continued to embrace both its hierarchical and deferential past (best symbolized by Washington), while rejecting the exploitative aspects of its egalitarian present (best symbolized by Lincoln).

Further, if Lincoln were a mere projection of the present, it would have made no sense for Progressives to have asked, as they did, "What would Lincoln do if he were alive today?" Lincoln served not merely as a mirror of society, reflecting continuity, but also as a lamp or guide for emulation. Progressives assumed that Lincoln's actual feelings and thoughts about major policy issues would be at least consistent with theirs. If current wage policies are a form of slavery, then the image of Lincoln can be used to argue for a new "emancipation proclamation," and so forth. Wilson used the image of Lincoln to fight for global democracy and to establish a "new birth of freedom" in Europe. Schwartz grants that the selections were often exaggerated, but insists that they bore some resemblance to Lincoln's actual accomplishments and sustained the moral values that made those accomplishments worth remembering. "Exaggeration" is an understatement; they often bore no relation to reality at all, as in the image of Lincoln as supporting racial integration and civil rights for blacks. Schwartz, like other Lincoln devotees, is often reduced to special pleading when confronted by embarrassing aspects of Lincoln's career — something he is not prepared to listen to when it comes to those critical of nationalist symbols. He brushes aside, for example, "inflated Native American claims" for their heroes. Inflated merit is a serious matter for his argument against the constructionists — though perhaps not insurmountable — since the argument leans heavily on claims to truth. Those claims are that commemorative symbols in general, and Lincoln commemoration in particular are not merely weapons in a political struggle, but are cognitive, ontological, and moral symbols of truth. They frame political reality (in Lincoln's case, American political reality); enable one to apprehend it; provide standards for conduct, and in part constitute the political reality by participation in it. But, if this is true — and with some qualification it is — it must be possible to evaluate symbols in respect to truth.

Is there another account of how American national identity becomes tied to Lincoln? And is Lincoln a good or bad symbol of the American political tradition? Schwartz's answer, roughly, is that there is a common American political culture that contains essential features exemplified in Lincoln's actual career. No other career embodies these elements to the extent that Lincoln's does, and so it is fitting that he should be not merely the symbol, but the icon of American national identity. The term "icon" is not misplaced, because Schwartz's description of Lincoln's relation to

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American national identity picks out a divinity more than a political hero: "Lincoln . . . became America's universal man: changing and remaining the same; standing beside the people and above the people; a reflection of and model for them — at once behind, above, and within them" (p. 312). Lincoln is a symbol of American nationalism, because there could be no nationalism without the creation of a unitary American state, and Lincoln more than anyone else is responsible for the emergence of such a state. To appreciate this it is necessary to understand the great gulf that exists between pre-Lincolnian and post-Lincolnian America.

The Union of the Founders was not a unitary state. It was a federation of sovereign states that had created a central government as their agent, and had endowed it with only enumerated powers, mainly defense, commerce, and making foreign treaties. To delegate powers is not to renounce sovereignty, and so it was widely understood that an American state, being sovereign, could withdraw those powers it had delegated to the central government and withdraw from the Union. Throughout the *antebellum* period, America was described not as a Nation but as a Union of States. And the Union was regularly described as an "experiment." An experiment is something that can be called off, and it was widely understood that a state, through a convention of its people, could secede.

The section that most often considered secession was New England: 1803, 1808, 1814, 1843. The key platform of the abolitionist movement that arose in New England was that the North should secede from the South as the best way of undermining slavery. When the South seceded, the abolitionists at first approved. This was even the view of Frederick Douglass' *The Douglass Monthly*. But Lincoln refused to negotiate. In doing this, he abandoned the American tradition rooted in the Declaration of Independence that acknowledged the right of secession, and strongly intimated that should the "experiment" of the Union fail, its dissolution should be carried out by peaceful negotiations.[2]

Lincoln justified the invasion with an absurd legal theory derived from Joseph Story's *Commentaries* (1833). The Union, he said, was older than the states and in fact created them as states. If this were true, sovereignty would reside in the American people in the mass. The will of the people would be expressed through their central government, the states being mere administrative units of the central government.[3] A state could no more legally secede from the Union than a county could legally secede from a state. Had this historically false theory been put forth at the Philadelphia Convention or during the Ratification

2. For an account of the secessionist tradition in America, see *Secession, State, and Liberty*, ed. by David Gordon (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 1998), especially Donald Livingston, "The Secession Tradition in American" and Thomas Di Lorenzo, "Yankee Confederates: New England Secession Movements Prior to the War Between the States."

3. On the question of the legality of secession, see Donald Livingston, "The Secession Tradition in America," *op. cit.*, and James Ostrowsk's "Was the Union Army's Invasion of the Confederate States a Lawful Act? An Analysis of President Lincoln's Legal Arguments Against Secession," in Gordon, ed., *Secession, State, and Liberty*, *op. cit.*

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debates, it is certain that there would have been no Union.

The war to suppress secession was Lincoln's war. He illegally raised money and troops for an invasion, suspended the writ of *habeas corpus* in the North for the duration of the war, rounding up some 20,000 political prisoners, shut down hundreds of newspapers, and used the military to influence elections, including his own narrow victory in 1864. It was the Lincoln administration that first broke the European code of civilized warfare by directing war against civilians.[4] The war created Wall Street. The banking acts of the Lincoln administration centralized banking and currency and destroyed state bank notes, thereby weakening regional economies and the distinct cultures and ways of life that depended on them.

So massive was the centralization needed to win the war that the federative polity of the Framers never recovered. Lincoln was not preserving an indivisible Union, as he said he was, for he had inherited no such union. Rather, he was creating one — as Bismark was doing with the principalities of Germany — with a policy of blood and iron. After the war, as the great *antebellum* Southern writer, William Gilmore Simms, dryly observed, no Northern state any longer retained a republican form of government — something that the Constitution had guaranteed. The empty language of federalism would remain — as did the language of republicanism in the Roman empire — but America would now follow the nation states of Europe in the global imperial adventures that a powerful unitary state made possible.

Everyone knew that the war was Lincoln's war and that the victory was his victory. Though Lincoln was not well liked at his death, war and centralization had violently restructured social, economic, and political forces into the pattern of a unitary nation state. Lincoln's generation was the first to practice under this kind of state, and, having had no experience at "nationalist" conduct, they behaved in a way that resembled children in an unattended candy store. Corruption was spectacular. More land was given to the railroads than was contained in Texas. The Progressives inherited both the invented "nation" and the corruption. As they sought to come to terms with both, they naturally took Lincoln as their symbol. No other symbol was possible, for he alone had seared the centralizing nationalist idiom into the public mind through his war and his rhetoric.

Modern "nation" states, whether liberal, fascist, or communist, have one thing in common. The centralized power they require is allergic to independent social authorities. Hobbes called them "worms" in the commonwealth. These must be destroyed, eviscerated, or marginalized. The result is the creation of masses and a collective consciousness unified by an ideology, such as natural rights, the class struggle, etc. Masses are vulnerable. And as they are created by

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4. B. H. Liddell Hart, *Revolution in Warfare* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1947), pp. 72-79; see also Thomas Di Lorenzo, *The Real Lincoln, A New Look at His Agenda and an Unnecessary War* (Roseville, CA: Random House, 2002), and Charles Adams, *When in the Course of Human Events, Arguing the Case for Southern Secession* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2002).

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the destructive power of the state, so they look to the state for nourishment and warmth. Having the divine attributes of indivisible sovereignty, the modern state is, as Hegel said, that veritable god on earth. The figure in the Lincoln memorial is not a Roman republican senator, patriot, or hero, but a Roman god on his throne. As an account of Lincoln's relation to the Progressive mind, Schwartz's study is illuminating. Indeed, it is not possible to fully appreciate the Progressive mind without exploring its Lincoln iconography.

Where it errs is in its claim about the *truth* of Lincolnian symbols. Lincoln does symbolize the truth of a certain kind of Americanism. But truth, as Hegel said, is the whole. If the American tradition as a whole is included, Lincoln expresses only a partial truth. When Lincoln symbols are presented as the whole truth, as the Progressives presented them, and as Schwartz presents them, they are false and corrupting. It is not just that Lincoln symbols occlude an important part of the American political tradition; they transmute that part, by an act of philosophical alchemy, into the other part. In a word, they Lincolnize pre-Lincolnian symbols, as King Midas turned everything he touched into gold. Such transmutation is not only corrupting (for it is always corrupting to claim that the part is the whole), it conceptually destroys the other part of the tradition, and, consequently, an intellectual and moral resource that one day might be needed should the favorite part reach a dead end. The resource will not be available, having been erased from memory. King Midas would one day have to eat, but he would not be able to do so.

What part of the tradition do Lincoln symbols occlude and transmute? The entire decentralist tradition beginning with the secession from Britain, the Articles of Confederation, the anti-federalists, the strong decentralist teaching to be found even in the *Federalist*, and the dynamic federalism of the period from 1790-1860 when states, as corporate entities, were major players in politics, invoking in every section the right of interposition to check unconstitutional acts of the central government and to secede if necessary. Any federal system that is serious about protecting the distinct cultures and ways of life of its federal units must allow some form of state interposition or secession. All of this is occluded by Lincoln's absurd theory that the states never were sovereign and that the Union created the states. In principle, this means that the only solutions open to Americans are centralist solutions.

But there are alternative ways to think. Some problems are best solved not by centralization, but by division. The Soviet Union divided in 1989. Switzerland has long solved the problem of ethnic minorities not with the centralist solution of minority rights, but with minority states. The Confederate Constitution was the most thoughtful development of the decentralist American tradition. It is wrong to think of it as a "Southern" constitution. It was an *American* constitution, bearing the imprint of Jefferson, Madison, and a long line of other thinkers, Northerners as well as Southerners, whose credentials as American statesmen are unquestioned. It is essentially the Constitution of 1789 reformed to prevent

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runaway centralization and to protect the distinct cultures of the states.

Its reforms were admired by such thoughtful men as Lord Acton.[5] Since the Confederate Constitution is virtually unknown, a few of its reforms should be mentioned. Its president serves a single six-year term. A vote of two-thirds is needed for a spending bill (something George Washington desired). Each bill is tied to a special object to be funded, which prevents log-rolling. Subsidies for business are strictly forbidden. Internal improvements can be made to harbors and the like to facilitate commerce, but the government must be reimbursed by tolls paid by users. Any three states can call a convention of the states to vote on an amendment to the Constitution. The slave trade was outlawed, and non-slave holding-states could be added to the Confederacy. And, as with Canada and the former Soviet Union — the latter framing the first constitution to explicitly allow secession — a state could secede from the federation. James Buchanan, a Nobel laureate in economics, has urged that the European Union explicitly acknowledge a right of secession for member states as the only check on promiscuous centralization. The Confederate Constitution was designed, as its founders said, as an instrument to check the disposition of modern states to centralize power.[6]

A decentralist *American* regime of this sort would behave quite differently from that of Lincoln's indivisible unitary state. For example, the five Indian tribes in the Oklahoma territory fought for the Confederacy, and were seated in Congress on the promise that after independence they would be included as a sovereign Indian state. Under Lincoln's unitary state, they were reduced to the helplessness of a federal reservation. Or again, the dynamic decentralist tradition that had animated American federal politics up to 1860 had kept the central government in check, tied down, as Jefferson had said, by "the chains of the Constitution." From the 1830s to 1860, the central government was virtually out of debt and imposed no inland taxes. It lived off a tariff on imports and land sales. The states also were cautious in taxing their citizens. Here was a regime unlike anything the highly centralized, debt-ridden, over-taxed, and militarized European regimes had ever seen. But it was just this regime that frustrated Lincoln's political agenda, which was to establish Henry Clay's "American System." The platform of the system was, as Lincoln said many times, very simple: a high tariff to protect Northern industry (which would devastate the South's export economy), subsidies to big business (by 1860, most states had outlawed these subsidies, having experienced their failures), and a central banking system (which would allow large concentrations of capital to control the money supply). This was the platform of the Whig Party. Lincoln was a Henry Clay Whig to the bone. But the party had been rejected by the voters, and had collapsed. His war on the South was an instrument for imposing the old Whig

5. *Selected Writings of Lord Acton*, ed. by J. Rufus Fears (Indianapolis, IN: Liberty Classics, 1985), pp. 216-79 and 361-67.

6. The standard study on the Confederate Constitution is Marshall DeRosa's *The Confederate Constitution of 1861* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1991).

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program by force. This is what he meant when he said that he had made war on the South to preserve the Union and not to touch slavery.

But what about slavery? The image of Lincoln as the great emancipator and friend of black equality has covered a multitude of sins. But it is inconsistent with the facts of Lincoln's life. Like nearly everyone else in America, including many abolitionists, Lincoln believed that America was a white European polity in which neither blacks nor Indians would ever be equal social and political participants. Manumission laws throughout the North were designed to rid themselves of their African population and to control those who remained. New Jersey abolished slavery, but declared blacks apprentices for life. Lincoln's state after 1848 prohibited the entrance of any *free* blacks. Those already in the state could not vote, could not serve on juries or testify against white men, and had to pay taxes for an educational system that excluded their children. Lincoln, a white supremacist to the core, supported these laws, and was opposed to granting citizenship to free blacks in Illinois. He refused to sign a petition allowing free blacks to testify in court — something Jefferson Davis approved of. His view on the morality of slavery was simple: slavery abstractly considered is wrong, but blacks were never to be social and political equals in the American polity. His solution was to deport the entire black population. He supported legislation to deport the black population in Illinois, and worked hard as president to secure lands abroad for the deportation of all blacks.[7]

Until deportation could be effected, Lincoln's policy was to allow slavery to gradually wither of its own accord. He never objected to slavery in the states where it was legal; believed he had no authority to interfere with it, and supported the Amendment, passed by Congress, that made it *impossible ever to amend* the Constitution to interfere with slavery in the states were it existed. So if the South *had not* seceded, slavery would have lasted as long as the Southern states desired.[8]

Lincoln was an anti-abolitionist who feared a sudden universal emancipation. If blacks in the South were suddenly emancipated they might flock North in mass, putting pressure on Illinois' constitutional barrier to keep free blacks out. Lincoln's only quarrel with slavery was that it should not expand westward. But this was a virtual non-issue, for the expansion of slavery west was not practical. By 1860, there were only 17 slaves in the western territories. The loud noise made in resistance to this fantasy expansion was motivated by the desire to keep *Africans* of any kind out of the west, slave or free. Lincoln endorsed the Republican Party platform in 1856, which declared that "all the unoccupied territory of the United

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7. The best study of Lincoln's racism is Lerone Bennett's *Forced into Glory* (Chicago: Johnson Publishing, 2000). Though disfigured by a spiteful tone, Bennett nevertheless has done his homework, and has succeeded in raising a murmur among Lincoln devotees.

8. On the South seceding for economic and political reasons, see Charles Adams, *When in the Course of Human Events, Arguing the Case for Southern Secession*, *op. cit.*, and Thomas Di Lorenzo, *The Real Lincoln, A New Look at Abraham Lincoln, His Agenda, and an Unnecessary War*, *op. cit.*

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States, and such as they may hereafter acquire, shall be reserved for the white Caucasian race — a thing that cannot be except by the exclusion of slavery."[9] But even if the Western expansion of slavery had been a problem, it was entirely solved as a problem of *national* politics by the South's secession.

The moral postulate guiding most American historiography of the war of 1861-65 is that the Union should have been preserved at all cost. That is as true of Southern as of Northern writers. This postulate guides inquiry in one direction rather than in another; it exposes one set of facts, but ignores others. It celebrates an outcome as a necessity, ignoring rationally defensible counter-factual propositions about other outcomes. History written under this postulate is and must always be Whiggish nationalist history. But though deeply established, the postulate, as a moral proposition, is not defensible. The Union, in half a century, had swollen to some ten times its original size. Such rapid expansion was unstable, creating at each stage new majorities and new minorities. Secession is destabilizing precisely because it creates new majorities and new minorities, but so does rapid and vast scale *expansion*. A peacefully negotiated settlement to dissolve the Union was the best solution to all the problems confronting it in 1860. When the Soviet Union peacefully dissolved in 1989, it was 70 years old — the same age as the American Union in 1860. Lincoln adamantly refused to negotiate. Had he done so, only the states of the Deep South would have seceded. Virginia, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Arkansas all had voted to remain in the Union after the Confederacy was born. And even the Deep South states probably would have returned at some later date, just as Ukraine today is considering a new connection with Russia. If they had not, the U.S. would have remained a Union of vast scale, and could have existed alongside a Southern confederation as easily as it does now with a Canadian confederation. Lincoln's decision to make war on the entire region to force it into the Union against its will, if applied to America today and adjusted for current population, would have resulted in over 5 million battle deaths, an equal number of wounded, and millions missing. Americans have never come to moral terms with this barbarism, and nationalist historians, writing history as they do from the postulate that the Union should have been preserved at all costs, guarantee that there will never be a coming to terms with it.

Within the decentralist tradition, secession of a sovereign political society by its people assembled in convention is a specifically American practice. In 1860, it was the best solution to the two main problems facing the federation: the tariff and slavery in the western territories.[10] That this is not widely understood is due

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9. Robert Durden, "Ambiguities in the Antislavery Crusade of the Republican Party," pp. 362-94, in *The Antislavery Vanguard*, ed. by Martin Duserman (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1965).

10. For a contemporary defense of the Northern abolitionist argument that secession was the best solution to the problem of slavery, see Jeffrey Hummel, *Emancipating Slaves and Enslaving Freemen* (Chicago and La Salle, IL: Open Court, 1995).

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to two corrupt myths. The first is Lincoln's preposterous theory that the states were the creatures of the Union, and that, consequently, secession was *treason.* The second is that Lincoln led a holy war to free the slaves. Neither of these is true. Secession was not treason in 1860, nor would it be today. If the people of California, in a convention called to consider secession, should vote to secede, and if all states west of the Mississippi should follow and form a western federation, and seek a negotiated dissolution of the Union, that could not properly be called treason. Much less was secession treason in 1860. And what moral judgment can be made if the rump of the US should direct scorched earth war against civilians, destroying two-thirds of the region's wealth and killing one-quarter of its male population of military age (a larger percentage of battle deaths in relation to population than any country that fought in WWII)? The Union governor of Mississippi, William Sharkey, testified before Congress in 1866 that at least a third of the blacks in Mississippi had died of starvation, disease, and other dislocations of war. Americans have yet to come to terms with the barbarism of Lincoln's war to suppress an American secession.

The second myth is also false. The North did not invade to emancipate blacks and improve their condition. During the antebellum period, there was no national political party of any importance that urged emancipation. Van Buren's Free Soil Party had a compensated emancipation plank, but voters scornfully rejected it, as did Lincoln who shamefully played the race card against it. Lincoln's war was motivated by what motivates most wars: control of resources, territory, and revenue. Lincoln invaded the South to establish Henry Clay's "American system." There was no higher moral purpose to it. That emancipation occurred as an unintended result of war — and under the worst possible conditions for all parties — confers no moral dignity to the war. The myth of a holy crusade to emancipate slaves also occludes the moral resources the South had to deploy in bringing about a gradual emancipation. Thoughtful Southerners, such as Robert E. Lee who had freed his slaves, believed the institution to be on its way out; so, too, did Jefferson Davis, who thought that secession would mean the end of slavery. Before 1860, there was no support for a *nationally* supported emancipation; it would have to be done by the Southern States themselves. For this they would need considerable economic resources, peace, stability, good will, and patience. These were not possible under Northern economic exploitation and in a Union torn by spectacular moral hatred.

Just how *American* the South's secession was can be brought out with a thought experiment. In 1860, Virginia, Tennessee, North Carolina, and Arkansas were pro-Union. Their legislatures voted not to join the Confederacy. They reversed themselves only after Lincoln called for an invasion. They would not be part of a Union held together by bayonets. It is highly probable that Washington, Jefferson, Madison, and other Virginians of the Founding period would have done the same. They all would have initially urged support of the Union, but none

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would have allowed Virginia to be an instrument of war against states whose citizens in convention had voted to secede. One must remember that the Virginia Founders, along with those of New York and Rhode Island, wrote into their ordinances ratifying the Constitution the right to secede. Using the logic of commemorative symbolism that Schwartz defends, it could be said, retrospectively, that Jefferson and Madison were "Confederates," or, to put the same point another way, that the Virginia Confederates were Jeffersonian and Madisonian Americans. The Great Seal of the Confederacy bore an equestrian statue of Washington. Herman Melville understood this, and writing at a time before the Lincoln myth was established could say:

> Who looks at Lee must think of Washington
> In Pain must think and hide the thought
> So deep with grievous meaning is it fraught.[11]

The point of the Lincoln myth is to erase this thought entirely from memory. Only by pondering the falsity of the myth is it possible to see that there are two incommensurable Americanisms: a Lincolnian centralist Americanism and a Jeffersonian decentralist Americanism. Schwartz is right to see Lincoln as the indispensable symbol of a centralized American state in its imperial capacity and as a symbol of its supposedly benevolent relations to its citizens. For this kind of American, Lincoln is and must be first in the hearts of his countrymen with respect to centralized state warfare and welfare. But Lincoln cannot be a symbol of the decentralist tradition. During the Cold War there was a movie called *Amerika* in which the United States is taken over by the Soviets. A great parade is held to celebrate "the new birth of freedom" that the progressive Marxist regime is bringing to America. Carried in the parade are two huge portraits symbolizing the new country, one of Lenin and one of Lincoln. The two images make sense together. The images of Lenin and Jefferson would not.

Throughout the book, Schwartz carries on a running battle with multiculturalists who argue that national symbols are oppressive because they drive out local and vernacular heroes. His reply is standard liberal boilerplate: Lincolnian nationalism is oppressive only in the sense of its corrosive effects on "tribalism" and the melting of separate peoples into "an increasingly free, open, and congenial society." He seems not to have noticed that this "congenial society," for the past 40 years or so, has been in a condition of chronic low intensity civil war. Nor does he adequately appreciate that the society he describes is the subversion of the federative polity of the Founders. That polity vested sovereignty in states and local communities, endowing them with the strongest possible legal protection for preserving *distinct ways of life*, which is quite different from the liberal ideal

11. Herman Melville, "Lee in the Capitol," in *Battle Pieces* (New York: Harper and Bros., 1860; Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1972), p. 232.

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of a society that provides legal protection only for an *individual's* choice of a life plan. The anti-federalists warned that if the Constitution were adopted, the central government would eventually gain the power to destroy states and local sovereignty, and to "consolidate" the whole into a nationalist regime. The *Federalist* assured the world that this could never happen. But it happened with Lincoln, and the result would eventually be a unitary state ruling over increasingly rootless individuals, held together only by enlightened self-interest and an ideology of universalist liberalism to be exported globally.

In this spiritual desert, it is not surprising that the social nature of man should reassert itself, if only in the distorted, vacuous, and comic form of "multiculturalism." Schwartz does not see that multiculturalism is the rebellious offspring of Lincolnian nationalist liberalism carried to its logical conclusion. The strategy of liberal elites — and that includes most of those called "conservatives" — is to manage multiculturalism in the only way they know how — though increased centralization. Its hope is to turn multiculturalism into another form of liberal monoculturalism — a kind of post-modern version of the melting pot. To accomplish this it will be necessary to pursue more vigorously the hollowing out and flattening out of the remnants of traditional American society. But here liberalism is playing with fire and is entirely out of its element; for if there is one thing that liberals do not understand, it is *culture*. T. S. Eliot explained culture as that which makes life worth living, and culture is and can be rooted only in the illiberal notion of the cult, with its attendant notions of the good and authority. Intimated in these ideas is not global integration and centralization, but separation and division into polities of human scale. How this can be brought about in 21st century America is a vexing problem. But it cannot even be considered independently of the moral and intellectual resources of the American decentralist tradition. These resources are hidden by the Lincoln myth.

But the decentralist tradition is still alive, and can be given new life whenever Americans choose to do so. In his address to Congress, July 4, 1861, Lincoln said: "The Union is older than any of the states, and, in fact it created them as states." But a little over a century later, Reagan said in his first inaugural address: "The Federal government . . . did not create the states; the states created the Federal government." One of the grand old men of the 20th century, George Kennan, recently argued that the US has grown too large to be governed from the center; he thinks the time has come for thoughtful people to begin considering how to downsize it. He does not claim to know how to do this; he insists that any division, if it is to be successful, must be the result of long and patient discussion. But he suggests a division into twelve natural political unions.[12]

To those whose souls are attuned to mystical Lincolnian nationalism, this

12. George F. Kennan, *Around the Cragged Hill* (New York: W. Norton, 1993), Ch. 7, "Dimensions." See also Donald Livingston, "Dismantling Leviathan," in *Harper's Magazine* (May, 2002), pp. 13-17.

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suggestion is unthinkable. Does "manifest destiny" not teach that God ordained this land from sea to shining sea, and that consequently the secession of eleven American states in 1861 was treason? But "manifest destiny" also implied taking possession of Canada as well completing territorial integration. Canada was unsuccessfully invaded twice for that purpose. But suppose the operation had succeeded, and that the "Canadian states" (excluding Alaska) should today vote to form a union of their own. As in 1861, there would be protests that the new union would not be economically viable; that there would be constant war between the two unions, as in Europe, and that Alaska would not be economically and militarily secure if cut off from the other states. But, in fact, the arrangement of an independent Canadian union and a detached Alaska works quite well. Here, as elsewhere, the dominance of Lincolnian symbols serves to shrink the scope of the moral imagination.

What is called the Civil War was in fact America's French Revolution, and, like the unhappy French, the result has been a fractured memory. There are two incommensurable idioms of Americanism: Jeffersonian decentralism and Lincolnian centralism, neither one of which, as ideal identities, can acknowledge the legitimacy of the other. Any adequate theory of American commemorative memory should take account of this fracture. Schwartz's study moves wholly and innocently within the frame of Lincolnian nationalism. It is not surprising, therefore, that — in opposition to the constructionists — he should see Lincolnian symbols as the truth of American political experience. But, viewed in the light of the whole of that experience, Lincolnian symbols are only a part. And it is just here that the constructionist theory reappears on a deeper level, and with a vengeance: Lincolnian symbols are weapons in the continuing struggle between these two Americanisms.

Donald W. Livingston

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The Chemical Theory of Mental Illness

Elliot Valenstein, *Blaming the Brain*: *The Truth about Drugs and Mental Health* (New York: The Free Press, 1998), 292 pp. Hardcover $ 25.00.

T. M. Luhrmann, *Of Two Minds: The Growing Disorder in American Psychiatry* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2000), 337 pp. Hardcover $26.95.

In the world of American pop culture, the current view of mental illness is that someone is walking down the street, everything is going fine, life is good, the sun is shinning, and then, all of a sudden, out of the blue, there is a chemical shortage. At the route of every twisted thought is a twisted molecule — so the thinking goes. Along comes the modern day psychiatrist armed with an arsenal of drugs to normalize the chemical imbalance and the patient is cured. No more twisted molecules, so no more twisted thoughts. A recent ABC news poll reported that one out of every eight adults has taken an antidepressant in the past ten years. In 1999 alone, three-and-a-half billion doses of SSRI's were consumed,[1] all based on the theory that mental illnesses are due to an underlying biological deficit. Biological psychiatry has never had its shortage of critics, but from academia the critics have been few and far between. However, in the last several years, two books are making it a bit more acceptable to at least question the grand oversimplifications of biological psychiatry.

In *Blaming the Brain*, Elliot Valenstein examines the evidence supporting the theories that mental illnesses are biologically based and concludes that these theories are not on as firm a foundation as commonly portrayed: "What physicians and the public are reading about drugs and what causes mental disorders is by no means a neutral reflection of all the information that is available" (p. 220). In *Of Two Minds*, T. M. Luhrmannn examines the education of psychiatry residents. According to her: "It [psychiatry] lets you into the back bedroom of conventional behavior, so that you glimpse behind the polite interfaces of everyday life the true weirdness of human feeling" (p. 5). Luhrmann goes into the back bedroom of psychiatry education and provides a glimpse of the forces pushing traditional psychotherapy off the stage to make room for the ascension of biological psychiatry. Luhrmann and Valenstein are neither anti-psychiatry nor anti-medication, but they both lament the removal of psychotherapy (talk therapy) from the modern day psychiatrist's black bag. Valenstein notes that in this world

1. See Prozac Backlash, ABCNews.com. Originally reported April 10, 2001.

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of HMO medicine typical doctors will know more about someone they sit next to on a four hour plane ride than they will know about their own patients.

The basic tenet of biological psychiatry is that mental illness is an "organic" disease, meaning that the patient has too much or too little of a neurotransmitter, too much or too little of a receptor, or an overactive or underactive neuronal circuit. Whatever the problem might be, it is "biological," and biological problems are best treated with drugs. Mental illnesses are now mentioned in the same breath as diabetes, heart disease, and other organic diseases. However, even if mental illnesses are partly due to underlying biological deficits, it does not necessarily mean that medication is the best option.[2]

According to Nancy Andreasen, the biological model of mental illness can be summed up as follows: "1) The major psychiatric illnesses are diseases. 2) These diseases are caused principally by biological factors and most of these reside in the brain. 3) As a scientific discipline, psychiatry seeks to identify the biological factors that cause mental illness. 4) The treatment of these diseases emphasizes the use of somatic therapies."[3] Thus, the brain of a psychiatric patient is essentially a collection of neurotransmitters and receptors in need of fine-tuning. As an illustration of how *much* importance biological psychiatry places on biology, and how *little* on the environment, consider Andreasen's view of schizophrenia, one of the most well studied psychiatric disorders and, in the view of many biological psychiatrists, the best example of a disease with a genetic basis. She mentions that the best data implicating a genetic component to schizophrenia come from twin studies. She does not mention that there are problems with these studies; that they are still controversial; and that they have been severely criticized.[4]

The advantage of comparing identical to non-identical twins is that the former have the exact same genetic make-up, while the latter only share 50% of the same genes. Therefore, some would say, any difference in the rate of schizophrenia between the two groups could be accounted for by their different genotypes. The study Andreasen cites found that when one identical twin is diagnosed with schizophrenia, there is a 50% chance that the other twin will also be diagnosed. When one examines non-identical twins, the concordance rate falls to 15%. But with a purely genetic disease, the concordance rate between identical

2. For a comparison between therapy and medication see David Antonuccio, William Danton, and Garland DeNelsky, "Psychotherapy versus Medication for Depression: Challenging the Conventional Wisdom with Data," in *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, Vol. 26, No. 6 (1995).

3. Nancy Andreasen, *The Broken Brain: The Biological Revolution in Psychiatry* (New York: Harper and Row, 1984), pp. 29-30.

4. For a critical discussion of the genetics of schizophrenia, see Jay Joseph, *The Gene Illusion: Behavior Genetic and Psychiatric Genetic Methods and Research under the Microscope* (Llangarron: PCCS Books, forthcoming), and Jay Joseph, "The Danish-American Adoptees' Family Studies of Kety and Associates: Do They Provide Evidence in Support of a Genetic Basis of Schizophrenia?" in *Genetic, Social, and General Psychology Monographs* (2001), Vol. 127, No. 3, pp. 241-278.

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twins would be 100%. In the case of schizophrenia, where the concordance between identical twins is only 50%, something else must be at work. Even Andreasen acknowledges this: "One is bound to conclude from these various studies of the genetics of schizophrenia that hereditary factors play a role, but they are not all-important. What, then, are the other factors thought likely to produce schizophrenia?"[5] However, her list of possible contributing factors includes only two candidates, a virus and a difficult delivery.

For Andreasen, the environment is not even a potential contributing factor. In the world of biological psychiatry, "nature" has won the gold medal and "nurture" does not even come in a distant second. While biological psychiatry has bumped "nurture" off the stage, the rest of the neuroscience community has not gone so far. Traits such as height or the ability of a child to sit still in a classroom are dependent on two things: 1) genes and 2) the environment. The relative contributions of each have been debated for years. Thus, according to Robert Sapolsky: "Genes . . . have plenty to do with behavior. . . they determine intelligence and personality. Certain genetic makeups cause criminality, alcoholism and a proclivity toward misplacing car keys . . . in truth, such bald statements about genes are a total crock. Genes influence behavior, the environment influences behavior, and genes and the environment interact — this view is one of the great scientific clichés of the latter part of the 20th century."[6]

A major problem with biological psychiatry is that it has gone overboard in taking the most complex structures and simplifying them. Valenstein, who has spent a lifetime studying the biological basis of behavior, has examined the core tenets of biological psychiatry, such as the biogenic amine theory of depression, the dopamine theory of schizophrenia; the theory that mental illness are physical diseases, and the belief that psychotherapeutic drugs relieve mental disorders in the same way that insulin is used for diabetes. He has concluded: "there is no convincing evidence that most mental patients have any chemical imbalance" (p. 4). He goes on to point out that there are major holes in most of the arguments supporting a biological basis for depression, attention deficit disorder, anxiety disorders, and even schizophrenia.

Valenstein's analysis of the role of *nature* and *nurture* in schizophrenia differs markedly from the standard view of biological psychiatry. Along with Andreasen, Valenstein's list of possible contributing factors includes toxins and infections, but he adds: "social and psychological factors undoubtedly play a major role in determining whether and how any predisposition will be expressed" (p. 225). He also points out that cell preparations, animal and human studies have all shown that experience can alter the gross and microscopic features of the brain: "The now overwhelming evidence that experience can alter neuronal structure and function should make it clear that it is dangerous to assume that any distinctive anatomical

5. Andreasen, *The Broken Brain*, *op. cit.*, p. 230.
6. Robert Sapolsky, "Genetic Hyping," in *The Sciences* (March/April 2000), p. 12.

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or physiological characteristic found in the brains of people with mental disorders was the cause of that disorder" (p. 128). So even if the brains of patients diagnosed with mental illness have altered neurotransmitter levels, it is not clear which is the cause and which is the effect. Instead of altered chemical levels causing depression, it is just as likely that stressful experiences lead to chemical changes in the brain.

The highlight of Valenstein's book is his coverage of the chemical theories of mental illness. He spends a considerable amount of time discussing the dopamine theory of schizophrenia, which states that schizophrenia is due to an overactive dopaminergic system. Early attempts to prove the theory centered on efforts to show that dopamine levels in the brains of schizophrenics were increased. After several studies failed to show this, the attention moved to the dopamine receptors. The hypothesis was that an increased number of receptors in the postmortem brains of schizophrenics would explain the overactive dopaminergic system. In 1978, Philip Seeman and his associates were able to show that the brains of schizophrenics had increased numbers of dopamine receptors compared to normal brains. Thus, the dopamine theory of schizophrenia seemed to be on a firm foundation.[7]

Yet, a closer examination reveals several problems. First, a problem typical of studies that equate biological traits with behavior is that there is never a direct correlation between the observed biology and the expected behavior. In the case of schizophrenia, there is a significant overlap in the number of dopamine receptors in the brains of patients and the control group. Second, most schizophrenics in these initial studies had received antipsychotics for some time. Since these drugs are known to increase the number of dopamine receptors in the brain, the conclusions are not as obvious as they appear. Seeman eventually replicated the study with brains of schizophrenics that had not received drugs, and found increased numbers of dopamine receptors. Since then, however, others have repeated these studies and come up with conflicting results. Valenstein points out that there is no agreement that most schizophrenics have an excess of dopamine, and he quotes Arvid Carlsson to the effect that there is "no good evidence for any perturbation of the dopamine function in schizophrenia." Valenstein concludes: "By picking and choosing the evidence . . . a seemingly convincing argument can be made that schizophrenia is caused by some impairment of a brain dopamine system" (p. 113), which stands in sharp contrast to Andreasen's summary: "All these pieces of research support the likelihood that the dopamine system has broken down in schizophrenia."[8]

Valenstein is also concerned with the relation between biological psychiatry and pharmaceutical companies. In their marketing efforts to promote the biological explanations of mental illness, pharmaceutical companies have stretched their fingers into patient advocacy groups, consensus panels, continuing education for

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7. Tyrone Lee *et al.*, "Binding of ^{3}H- neuroleptics and ^{3}H- apomorphine in schizophrenic brains," in *Nature* (1978), No. 274, pp. 897-900

8. Andreasen, *The Broken Brain*, *op. cit.*, p. 225.

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psychiatrists, and even major medical journals. Most problematic is the way funding drives research. Because they hold the purse strings, the pharmaceutical companies dictate what gets studied, resulting in little investigation into the role of psychosocial factors in the etiology of mental illness. Worse yet, doctors in search of information about a drug are much more likely to read a pharmaceutical company brochure than scientific journals. Valenstein provides several examples of the "spin" that the marketing departments put on research and concludes, "it must be kept in mind that pharmaceutical companies spend a lot of time designing ways to present the results of clinical trials to make their products look as good as possible, and their presentations should never be taken as objective evidence presented by a disinterested scientist" (p. 217). The language of biological psychiatry is replete with vague superficial terms such as "maybe," "possibly," and "might." Valenstein pierces this superficial layer to stress that the marketing departments have transformed these theories, in very subtle ways, into presentations that the general public interprets as proven facts.

As an anthropologist, Luhrmann entered the world of psychiatry training as an impartial observer. She spent four years following students progress through their residency program; she attended the same lectures they did; saw the same patients they saw; and was exposed to the same two worlds of psychiatry that they were exposed to. The problem for the students is the widening gap between these two worlds. Over the past forty years, psychiatry has traditionally been split into two camps, which until recently have managed a peaceful coexistence. In one camp, there are those psychiatrists who favor psychoanalysis or talk therapy; in the other, those psychiatrists who favor medication. The young residents are stuck in the middle. One day they hear from the biomedical professors who talk about biochemical pathways, transmitters, and receptors: for these professors mental illnesses are just like other diseases. Their favorite analogy is to compare mental illness to diabetes; one patient is short of insulin and the other is short of a neurotransmitter. The next day, residents may hear from a psychotherapist talking about loss, mourning, intentions, likes, dislikes, or "the messy complicated past."

After the residents move from didactic to clinical training, they are again exposed to the two conflicting sides of their profession. As residents observe older physicians working with patients, they see the pros and cons of each side: "In the one domain, there is the scientist, the fearless investigator of the truth. In the other, there is the psychoanalyst, the wise wizard of insight" (p. 158). In one telling scenario, Luhrmann documents the frustrations of a psychoanalysis teacher who asked first year residents what they would do if one of their patients called them by their first name. One of the students responded that he would say the patient was hypomaniac. Flabbergasted, the teacher later commented: "What do you say? What could you possible say to get that resident to understand what the patient felt like?" Lost on the young psychiatrist was the notion that "therapy is often experienced by people as intimate and personal"; instead, "the resident thought of this encounter as

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diagnosing a sick patient rather than as talking to a troubled person" (p. 251).

Most critics of biological psychiatry state that ignoring environmental causes in the etiology of mental illness is not based on sound scientific principles. Furthermore, as Luhrmann documents, this is not just an esoteric distinction because ultimately how one views mental illness affects the way patients are treated. In the age of HMO's, it is more cost effective to spend ten minutes with patients, write them prescriptions, and send them on their way. But is that really what is best for the patient? As Luhrmann puts it, "biomedicine encourages a way of thinking about mental illness that can strip humanity from its sufferers" (p. 23). In her words, "to say mental illness is nothing but disease, is like saying that an opera is nothing but musical notes. . . It impoverishes our sense of human possibility. And it cruelly punishes those who struggle with mental illness at its most savage" (p. 266).

Most of Luhrmann's book is observations; but the final chapter is a strong criticism of biological psychiatry. Unfortunately, she does not address the large body of the pertinent literature,[9] and she comes across as somewhat naïve about debates surrounding the scientific issues. As she followed these residents in their training, she was probably never exposed to the scientific debate, simply because they were never exposed to it. When Luhrmann's residents heard a psychopharmacologist explain experiments documenting the altered number of receptors in the brains of schizophrenics, did these residents also hear that these patients had been taking medication for years and that another distinct possibility is that the medication may have altered the number of receptors? So, after four years of observing the education of psychiatry residents, Luhrmann concludes that the pendulum has swung too far toward the biological/pharmacological side: psychiatry residents no longer look at patients as people with a history, and she quotes an older psychiatrist: "So few of the residents have any interest in learning how to get close to a patient. And so I mourn. I mourn at the passing of the torch to the biologists, however desirable it may be in some ways. I feel that something very special is going to be lost" (p. 251).

The earlier critics of psychiatry, many of them psychiatrists themselves, have focused on the underlying foundations of the biological theory of mental illness. Luhrmann does not examine the evidence in support of the theory, but rather the nature of the educational process that produces this disordered view of mental illness. Whereas earlier critics have argued *how* the underlying arguments of biological psychiatry are twisted, Luhrmann offers an explanation of *why* they are twisted. She probably does not mention some of these critics, because it is just not proper to do so in academic circles. However, her devastating criticism of biological psychiatry will now be mentioned in the same sentence as these earlier critics.

The chemical theory of mental illness is ingrained in the minds of virtually anyone living in 21st century America. Yet, the question "Where is the proof?" has

9. Luhrmann does, however, mention Thomas Szasz on p. 223.

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not been answered. In a recent debate, the President of the American Psychiatric Association, Rodrigo Munoz, sought to defend biological psychiatry. David Antonuccio, David Burns, William Danton, and William Donohue challenged many tenets of biological psychiatry, such as the biological basis of depression. According to these critics: "There is no persuasive or consistent evidence that a deficiency of brain serotonin causes depression or that an increase in brain serotonin relieves depression."[10] Munoz acknowledges that the "simplest and most effective way to win a debate is to point out the weakness in your opponent's position." But the best he can do is to claim that neuroimaging, biochemical studies, and genetic research "may help us to learn which neurotransmitter, cellular membrane and cellular metabolism factors are important in triggering depression and causing its persistence. Until we have a better understanding, we will have to use these tools."[11] This is not a powerful defense of a supposedly scientific system and, most importantly, it is rather different from the common claims made by pharmaceutical companies.

Instead of citing confirmed and replicated experiments, Munoz speculates about future successes. The phrases *right around the corner* or *just within our grasp* are common in biological psychiatry. Even Andreasen's summary of the dopamine theory of schizophrenia is far from a ringing endorsement: "we *know* that schizophrenics *may* have a chemical imbalance in their brains."[12] A more straightforward statement would be: "We do not know whether schizophrenia is caused by a chemical imbalance," or "Schizophrenics may have a chemical imbalance." In light of the weak science and superb marketing of these theories, it is easy to see why critics have claimed that the promotion of biological psychiatry is the most successful public relations campaign in the modern era.

The excesses of modern day psychiatry became all too obvious in November 2000, when David Healy delivered a lecture on the subject at the University of Toronto. A psychopharmacologist and historian of psychiatry, Healy had just been offered a job at the University of Toronto's Center for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH). When he delivered his lecture on the history of psychopharmacology at CAMH — his soon-to-be workplace — he had already accepted the offer. But during the talk, Healy did the unthinkable; he mentioned that Prozac might make some people more likely to take their own life. Not surprisingly Healy's job offer was rescinded within the week. The CAMH administrators stated that rescinding the job offer had nothing to do with the fact that CAMH had recently received a gift of $1.5 million dollars from Eli Lilly, the manufacturer of Prozac.[13]

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10. David Antonuccio, David Burns, William Danton, and William O'Donohue, "Rumble in Reno: The Psychosocial Perspective on Depression," in *Psychiatric Times*, Vol. XVII, No. 8 (August 2000), pp. 10-13.

11. Rodrigo Munoz, "Rumble in Reno: Psychopharmacologic Nihilism," in *Psychiatric Times*, Vol. XVII, No. 8 (August 2000). pp. 10-13.

12. Italics added. Andreasen, *The Broken Brain*, *op. cit.*, p. 230.

13. Sarah Boseley, "Better Pill," in *The Guardian* (May 7, 2001)

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It would be a mistake to think that Healy got in trouble over one comment in an academic lecture, because for years Healy has written extensively about the biological theories of mental illness.[14] In retrospect, the silencing of Healy should not surprise anyone, as he probably had been antagonizing the wrong people for some time. The CAMH lecture was likely the proverbial straw that broke the camel's back. What is shocking though, is the extent to which pharmaceutical companies have made inroads into academia. Healy did exactly what scientists are supposed to do; he had a hypothesis, he tested it, and he presented it in an academic setting. And he lost his job. Even if Healy is wrong and Prozac has nothing to do with suicide, in the world of biological psychiatry he spoke against predominant dogma. It is also odd that biological psychiatrists, who attribute so much of human behavior to chemicals, would be upset at the suggestion that a drug may contribute to harmful human behavior.

The chemical theory of mental illness has perhaps never had as much airtime since the events of Sept. 11. In the past several months, the pharmaceutical companies have saturated the American public with their view of mental illness. According to *The Wall Street Journal*, Glaxo Wellcome spent $16.5 million to promote Paxil in October 2001 — nearly twice as much as it spent in October 2000; during the same time period, Pfizer, the manufacturer of Zoloft, spent $5.6 million on TV and magazine ads. Possibly, the most extreme example of marketing gone astray belongs to Eli Lilly, who is offering a one-month free trial offer of Prozac-Weekly for new patients.[15] Whenever a company gives something away for free, the goal is to get the customer hooked. It is only natural that people are anxious after the bombing of the World Trade Center. However these are powerful drugs that are not easy to withdraw from.

Critics of biological psychiatry are typically portrayed as either conservative ideologues, who want everyone to pull themselves up by the boot straps, dreamy liberals who believe that all the problems of the world can be cured with a hug, hucksters who just want to sell books, or even Flat-Earthers. Yet, it would be impossible to read Luhrmann or Valenstein and tag them with one of these labels, at least

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14. Healy's 1997 book is a historical analysis of the intellectual development of the chemical theories of mental illness. In Healy's analysis, there was never any evidence to support the current biological theories of mental illness, and as a historian he looks for other reasons why the theory was so unquestioningly accepted: "During the 1970's the major psychiatric disorders became defined as disorders of single neurotransmitter systems and their receptors, with depression being a catecholamine disorder, anxiety a serotonin disorder, dementia a cholinergic disorder, and schizophrenia a dopamine disorder. The evidence to support any of these proposals was never there, but this language powerfully supported psychiatry's transition from a discipline that understood itself in dimensional terms to one that concerned it with categorical ones." See David Healy, *The Anti-Depressant Era* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), p. 163

15. Vanessa O'Connell and Rachel Zimmerman, "Drug Pitches Resonate with Edgy Public," in *The Wall Street Journal* (January 14, 2002).

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with any degree of credibility. These two authors do not discount the fact that people suffer, and indeed underlying both books is a profound concern for patients; patients who are told they have a biological deficit, prescribed a pill, and sent home.

Just as important, both of these authors are concerned about what is happening to the medical profession. The average citizen expects marketing departments to push their product, but the average citizen has much higher expectations of physicians and scientists. As Dr. David Cohen, a professor of social work at Florida International University has said: "Without undue exaggeration, biological psychiatry may be defined today as the *cult* of psychoactive drug use, trapping practitioners and clients in a chemical embrace while both deny that any ill may come of it."[16] The biological theory of mental illness is just that — a theory, and whenever a psychiatrist states that mental illness is due to an underlying biological deficit, the reply should be: "Show me the evidence."

Jonathan Leo

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16. David Cohen, "How to Detoxify from Common Illusions about Psychiatric Medications," in *Ethical Human Sciences and Services*, Vol. 3, No. 3 (Fall/Winter), pp. 207-211.

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On Mythic Mimesis

David Pan, *Primitive Renaissance: Rethinking German Expressionism* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2001), 241 pp. Hardcover $49.95

David Pan's study of German Expressionism focuses on three concepts: primitivism, myth, and mimesis. For Pan, "primitivism" is a preconscious dimension of experience within which the individual manages and mediates (as opposed to reconciles) the *essential* contradiction of matter and spirit (variously: reality and wish, real and fantastic, primitive and modern, individual and collective); "myth" is the trace of this mediating function, as well as the social form that best allows dealing with contradictions; and "mimesis" is the characteristic mode of mythic performance, an *expression* of some larger psychic totality, a trace of collective perserveration and the irrepressable resurrection of mythic essence.

Pan's primary argument is that a robust concept of the primitive as a psychic *and* aesthetic phenomenon helps to organize the diffuse and sometimes confusing work of German Expressionists. The misguided understanding of primitivism as exotica or the foreign "other" has encouraged scholars to ignore its profound influence in the works of Nietzsche, Freud, Picasso, Kandinsky, and most especially, Einstein. Pan offers a convincing reassessment of Expressionism as a route to the mythic structure of consciousness in a somewhat "antiliberal" rendition of the return of the repressed. Carl Einstein is the star and terminus of the study; the first five chapters are primarily designed to deliver the reader to Einstein in the final four.

Pan introduces his study by rescuing myth and ritual as a basic means of "organizing cultural life." He contrasts Walter Benjamin's famous rejection of myth and natural history with Einstein's embrace of myth and tradition. Siding with Einstein, Pan argues that the return to mythic forces caused by industrialization — a return that Benjamin condemned as a delusional re-enchantment — was "the return of a repressed dimension in human experience" that offered an alternative process of critical mediation. Implicit in Pan's introductory framing is Adorno's condemnation of Benjamin's dialectics as lacking "mediation." In his denial of any straightforward, homologous relation between ideological determinates and culture, Benjamin's life-long problematic was precisely that of locating a mediating apparatus for criticism, historical or otherwise. In contrast, Pan offers Einstein's aesthetic theory as a mode of mediation that, on the one hand, enables a navigation of the real, material conditions of existence and corresponding cultural forms (primarily through the avenue of art), and on the other, a mode of navigation that articulates the utopian fantasies of the collective within the social totality, but

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without collapsing onto the tired, "fixed archetypes of a collective unconscious." As a response to the instrumental rationality of scientism and the mythic progressivism of fascism, Pan positions primitivism as the proverbial third way.

The third way of primitivism is deployed in three parts. In the first part, "Primitivist Aesthetics," Pan locates the roots of a primitivist perspective in Nietzsche's early works, particularly *The Birth of Tragedy.* After a brief genealogy of the term "primitive," he brackets Nietzsche's concern with the illusory nature of language in order to argue that Nietzsche's primitivism concerned the celebration of Dionysian forces as a mimetic performance of the contradictions of human experience (here one recognizes the specter of Empedocles; "Love" and "Strife" are warring). Rather than being an artist of representation, Nietzsche's Dionysian individual taps into a "primal unity" or essence through the experience of pain in mimesis. This reading of primitivism is helpfully extended and clarified in the second part of the study, "Primitivism in Art," primarily through an analysis of Freud's *Totem and Taboo.* Pan suggests that when Freud was not overly concerned with the scientism of his study of magic and fetishism, he characterized primitivism as having "important cultural value for modern culture," unwittingly setting the stage "for an entirely new epistemology . . . based on the primitivist idea that knowledge arises as a projection of human wishes." The material and spiritual is linked to Freud's understanding of human desire (wishes) and social necessity (reality principle). Although Freud's "new epistemology" is not entirely consistent with his understanding of primitivism as somewhat backward, Pan effectively argues that Freud understood primitivism to be superior to modern perspectives in a number of ways, especially because of its healthy recognition and acceptance of the conflictual nature of human life. According to Pan, Freud suggested that primitivist consciousness is especially adept at contending with human limitations, the ultimate limitation being death. Because of its realist and managerial (as opposed to a transcendant or transcendental) approach to the conflicts of human being, Pan demonstrates that Freud appreciated the superiority of primitivist consciousness as a *collective* means of coping. At this point in the book, the significance of the relationship between collective subjectivity (in the psychic as opposed to the political sense) and primitivism begins to emerge as a normative, communitarian appeal.

Drawing on Freud's rehabilitation of myth as the collective depiction of psychic conflict, Pan turns to the art and theory of Kandinsky as his first case study. In this chapter, the author endeavors to illustrate the relation between abstraction and primitivism in Kandinsky's work at the level of form, whereby he reveals tensions between universalism and primitivism that only make sense through an understanding of the primitive as a mode of consciousness. Pan's primitivist reading of Kandinsky successfully organizes the artist's work into something coherent. In particular, Pan's reading of Kandinsky succeeds in wedding a more formalist understanding of primitivism as the liberating, romantic, and subjectivist basis for abstraction, and the historical, contextual understanding of primitivism as the

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commodification and colonization of the exotic. Although the latter is undoubtedly found in primitivist art, Pan's push for the collective subject or collective consciousness and socially shared myths as the primary contextual exterior provides for a novel, psychological account of Kandinsky's work.

In the third part, "Primitivism in Prose," Pan extends his discussion of Einstein to include his literary theory, which is more patently religious (although chapter six, "Construction and Mimesis in Carl Einstein's Theory of Art," is included in the second part, it fits more squarely within the third as an explication and reassessment of Einstein). In Pan's view, the basic outline of Einstein's theory of aesthetics (which is tantamount to a merging of the epistemological and the metaphysical) concerns a rejection of the "fixed categories of reason" in favor of "a model of totality" comprised of "shifting patterns of memory." These patterns are cued by works of art in such a way as to fuse subject and object into a "single process" of mimesis. "In this context," Pan suggests, "art's significance for life lies in its ability to structure perception by shaping structures of memory." Art *structures or imitates a psychic totality to which the individual must submit*. Such a humbling submission is described variously as "religious" and "spiritual" in ways that resemble Benjamin's remarks about the ritual and cult value of the "aura" of a work of art in "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproducibility." Yet, unlike Benjamin, who would liquidate the forces of myth and magic to "awaken" the collective spirit, the aura is for Einstein a formal site of identification, because its determination of consciousness invites the "creation of a collective" in worshipfulness. Whereas the liquidation of myth invites individualistic solipsism, narcissim, and delusions of autonomy, the embrace of myth as a mimetic mode admits of fallibility and the necessity of community through the "sacrifice" of self. The admission of fallibility and community via myth is not, however, "religious" in the common sense, but only in terms of a given myth's ability to bring people together in sacred, aesthetic experiences.

Thus, in Pan's later chapters, the subtext only hinted at in the introduction returns under the aegis of myth. Myth "provides a collective depiction of the conflict between human desires and natural forces that structures the latent memories of the individuals in a particular culture." Myth is not the representation or distortion of reality (as Benjamin would argue), but rather the expression or "performance" of a primal contradiction that humans can never escape, but only manage. Individuals are moved to believe and to act by mythic rhetoric, not because of "prior belief" or "religious dogma," but because they recognize within its form the pleasures of repetition in a kind of collective form of therapy. If form is, as Kenneth Burke suggests, "the creation of an appetite in the mind of the auditor, and the adequate satisfying of that appetite," then it makes sense that mimesis is Pan's preferred description of myth-in-action. As a rereading of German Expressionism, the book as a whole is exemplary in its ability to encourage the reader to think about the movement in a new way. Pan's primitivist scheme

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yields numerous insights, not the least of which is a powerful and persuasive explanation of the contradictions in Freud's *Totem and Taboo*. He provides an alternative understanding of dialectical thought — a *theological politics of the aesthetic* — that need not situate itself in terms of recent intellectual fashion.

But there are a number of missteps in Pan's analysis. First, as important as representation and mimesis are to Pan's arguments, their relation to each other remains unexplained. Second, as is necessarily the case with any cartographic or genealogical approach, in numerous places counter-evidence is elided in favor of the argument advanced. For example, in his discussion of Nietzsche's primitivism, Pan argues that despite "the fact that Nietzsche links myth to aesthetic experience, his claim that he has developed a metaphysics of art should not lead one to place too much emphasis on the role of the individual artist . . . even if Nietzsche himself was prone to do so at times." Although Pan finds many passages to support an essentialist Nietzsche, there are just as many that contradict such a reading. Further, Pan too easily brackets Nietzsche's celebration of the Dionysian artist who creates "beautiful veils" with language. Similar problems surface when he places Kandinsky and others in his primitivist box.

Perhaps the most glaring shortcoming of Pan's study is the lack of a more "traditional" conclusion. What stands in its place is an allegorical reading of Einstein's retelling of an African story, "The Wanderer of the Plain," which isolates the exchange of a buffalo as synecdoche for Pan's book. Such a cryptic summary may have been intended to function mimetically, yet the device only succeeds in burying the subtext of Pan's study behind an intertextual, Oedipal blind. The implications of Pan's reassessment are unclear, and the allegory of the African legend is unhelpful. How does this understanding of primitivism alter more mainstream, traditional assessments? How does this study correct or amend previous receptions of Einstein? What is the subtext of this study *vis-à-vis* religion and spirituality? What, ultimately, is at stake?

The only hint of an answer to these and related questions appears at the end of the introduction, and to some extent in a small number of brief, prefatory remarks in a handful of chapters. Owing to links forged between myth and fascism (*à la* Benjamin), Pan says "a proper understanding of primitivism and particularly of Einstein's work on the subject has never been allowed to develop," particularly because of his "vehement attack on liberalism." This fleeting remark undergirds the *normative* tone of the book as a whole, and a more direct engagment with the so-called "critique of liberalism" within which Pan situates the category of the primitive is sorely needed. The book can be said to pariticipate in this larger discourse in two ways. The first concerns the postcolonial critique of primitivism marshaled by scholars such as James Clifford, which Pan mentions briefly in the introduction to the chapter on Kandinsky. Pan's response to the commodification of primitivism as colonialist exotica, of course, is his more robust understanding of primitivism as a psychic category of human consciousness. As compelling as this argument of

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definition is, however, it leaves the reader wanting a more direct engagment with postcolonial critiques. Insofar as Pan charges scholarly liberalism with being responsible for the lack of critical work on Einstein, he seems to have missed an opportunity to reiterate the notion that liberalism's obsession with autonomy and the individual cannot account for community and tradition — values that Pan's understanding of primitivism embraces enthusiatically. Second, because of Pan's characteristically collectivist understanding of primitivism, *Primitive Rennaissance* is somewhat consistent with the communitarian critique of liberalism as lacking a sufficient understanding of the preconditions of liberty — be they common commitments to principles or a sense of shared identity and community. In the mythic mode, Pan argues that without "the buffalo, the village has no collective, that is, metaphysical basis for perceiving the world." Pan has done a good job explaining how buffalos work to consititute community aesthetically and therefore socially; but how this translates within the political, however, goes unexplained.

Joshua Gunn

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The Currency of Education

Mark C. Taylor, *The Moment of Complexity: Emerging Network Culture* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2001), xii +340pp. Hardcover $32.00.

I

"We are living in a moment of unprecedented complexity, when things are moving faster than our ability to comprehend them." Such an opening line is less than auspicious. These days, every writer points to the avalanche of information available and the absolute uniqueness of the present moment. The problem is that other writers explain this "newness" without a critical apparatus cognizant of the period's supposed uniqueness. Here is where Mark Taylor provides something particularly valuable. For all the talk of the importance of science in the contemporary world, he is the first philosopher to use scientific insights in constructing a philosophy of culture both diagnostic and prognostic. Taylor is also a teacher, which is endemic to his purppose in this book: "Optimism has never come easily to me. But after three decades of teaching, my students have taught me the imperative of hope. It is not enough for critical practice to have as its primary aim the production of texts that fewer and fewer people read. I can no longer look into the eyes of my remarkable students and tell them that all they have to look forward to is the endless struggle to undo systems that cannot be undone" (pp. 17-18).

The idea that a teacher would admit to learning from his students is revolutionary enough, but the admission that "it is not enough for critical practice to have as its primary aim the production of texts that fewer and fewer people read" is nothing less than a call to arms. Unfortunately, the idea that higher education might be of benefit to more than a group of academics is not often seriously considered. For Taylor, a writer whose personal voice has spoken with increasing volume in *Hiding* (1997) and *About Religion: Economies of Faith in Virtual Culture* (1999), *The Moment of Complexity* marks a personal scholarly departure. No longer does he align himself with poststructuralism and its main proponents: Michel Foucault, Jean Baudrillard, and especially Jacques Derrida (precisely those who take great joy in producing more and more criticism that no one reads). *The Moment of Complexity* marks a turn away from Kierkegaard and toward Hegel. Since the publication of *Journeys to Selfhood: Hegel and Kierkegaard* (1980), Taylor has argued that Hegel and Kierkegaard are the two most important philosophers for understanding the contemporary world. For Taylor, poststructuralism is Kierkegaard without the cross — especially Derrida's writings. But, whereas Kierkegaard saw faith as what combated the totalizing forces of Hegelianism in his day, Derrida views the whole of Western metaphysics as a totalizing structure.

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If Taylor has moved away from Derrida and his Danish intellectual ancestor, he has not fully embraced a thoroughgoing Hegelianism: "If the critical strategies designed to resist Hegel are turned back on themselves and read against the grain, it becomes apparent that various philosophies of difference harbor complexities and entail relational structures to which they remain blind. The nature of these complexities and the implications of these alternative structures can be understood by rethinking Hegel's system through complexity theory and vice versa" (pp. 48-49). The answer, then, is neither the Hegelian "both/and" nor the Kierkegaardian "either/or," neither absolute immanence nor absolute transcendence. The answer is the "neither/nor" of complex adaptive systems, which are non-totalizing, yet still act as a whole. These systems are constituted by their relational structures and are not reducible to their individual constitutive parts.

II

For the layman — indeed, for most humanists and most scientists — the term "complexity theory" is something new. "Whereas walls divide and seclude in an effort to impose order and control, webs link and relate, entangling everyone in multiple, mutating, and mutually defining connections in which nobody is really in control. As connections proliferate, change accelerates, bringing everything to the edge of chaos. This is the moment of complexity" (p. 23). While this claim may do particularly good diagnostic work, it is unclear whether it can be used to make any kind of prognosis. Taylor's prognosis comes from insights he has taken from contemporary evolutionary theory and information theory. He quotes Stuart Kauffman in describing what this "edge of chaos" actually is: "Borrowing a metaphor from physics, life may exist near a kind of phase transition. . . . Networks in the regime near the end of chaos — the compromise between order and surprise — appear best able to coordinate complex activities and best able to evolve as well" (p. 25). In Taylor's words, "To understand life, it is necessary to analyze the structure of the complex relations that create and sustain it. These relations are not, as structuralists would have us believe, merely synchronic but are also diachronic. Organisms are functional wholes that develop over time" (p. 86).

The reference to structuralism is particularly important for Taylor. Whereas Lévi-Strauss' structuralism attempted to reduce culture to biology by looking for an "essential" paradigm of language, Le Corbusier's architectural planning led to the grid-based designs of Mies van der Rohe. Of course, the Paris uprising of May 1968 sought to defeat the entrenched structralism of the academy, but Foucault, Baudrillard, and Derrida still work in the shadow. In Taylor's view, it is time to come out of that shadow: "For more than three decades, Foucault's constructivism, Derrida's deconstruction, and Baudrillard's account of simulacra have combined to form rich resources from which to assess various social and cultural developments. However, as we move into a new era, the limitations of these lines of analysis are becoming obvious. The creative possibilities of network culture cannot

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be understood unless new interpretative trajectories are fashioned" (p. 72). This is what Taylor attempts to do in *The Moment of Complexity.* No longer fighting the battle against structuralism, he is able to gain fresh insights through complexity theory, which does not shy away from structures, but allows them to evolve.

Evolutionary biology might help to understand that life occurs on the edge of chaos. But information theory helps to understand how to get to the edge. The simple answer is the relation between "information" and "noise." In a line that is a deliberate, if only implicit rebuke to Derrida, Taylor writes: "If there were such a thing as an absolute difference, it could not be recognized as such; it would be something like a pure noise that can never be heard. But noise is parasitical and thus never pure. . . . Noise and information, in other words, are thoroughly relative; what is noise at one level or in one location is information in another moment or in another location" (p. 110). Noise interrupts and disturbs systems in a parasitical way, but in so doing it brings them to the edge of chaos and allows them to adapt. Were it not for the distinction between noise and information, there could be no communication at all. Information, as Taylor notes, "is a difference that makes a difference" (p. 110). Before that difference is incorporated into a system, it is simply noise, but when it is, it communicates something. By allowing for noise, one allows for freedom.

For all of his attempts to clearly define complexity, Taylor admits, "[i]t should not be surprising that there is no simple definition" (p. 137). The reason for this comes from the ancient human dream "to reduce complexity to simplicity" (p. 137). "The desire for simplicity has long inspired efforts to explain the world in terms of simple systems that function smoothly and simple laws that can be reduced to simple equations. While advertised as so-called hard science, this vision is actually metaphysical or even theological" (p. 137). As Taylor has written many times, religion is most interesting where it is least obvious.

This dream of simplicity is not one whose realization must be deferred, but one that can never be realized. Any philosophy of culture must own up to this: "The rapid spread of information and telecommunications technologies is making increasing complexity an unavoidable part of everyday life for more and more people throughout the world. As complexity grows, the need to understand the implications of its dynamics becomes urgent" (p. 138). The need to rethink metaphysical assumptions is far more radical than even Derrida, Foucault, and Baudrillard imagined. If complex adaptive systems only held currency in the world of natural phenomena, however, there would be little need for students or the general public to pay much attention. In Taylor's view, an emerging network *culture* is on the horizon, and complexity can be discerned in "social, economic, political, and cultural life" (p. 141).

III

What are these implications? One is the way subjectivity is viewed. Taylor

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writes: "Consciousness requires the interrelation of an object and a subject, who is not yet self-aware. Neither subjects nor objects exist prior to or independent of this active interaction; each emerges in and through the other. . . . The relations between and among objects, like the interplay of subjects and objects, are not extrinsic but are intrinsic to the identity of particular objects" (pp. 207-208). The human person is not simply the result of biology or culture, but is influenced by and in turn influences the forces around him. "In emerging network culture, *subjectivity is nodular*" (p. 231). Human freedom and human action, far from being defeated, are given new prominence within the world of complex adaptive systems. "Webs and networks can no more exist without me than I can without them. In the absence of firm walls and fixed boundaries, it is impossible to put an end to this inconclusive interplay of networking. This is what I am — this is what we have become in the moment of complexity" (p. 232). The inconclusive interplay of networking is what allows for human freedom and human will. On the one hand, this interplay is not deterministic; on the other, there are rules within which human subjects operate. Complex adaptive systems imply neither the determinism of structuralism and the loss of human freedom nor the *laissez-faire* play of deconstruction and the loss of human community.

The Moment of Complexity ends with a coda, titled "The Currency of Education." Here, Taylor describes how contemporary American higher education has not adapted to the world of complexity, rooted in remnants of the Oxbridge system and Kant's 1798 essay "The Conflict of the Faculties." First, he offers an analogy: "Anticipating the logic that would eventually issue in the assembly line, the university produces education for *mass consumption*. In order to function efficiently, the labor process is divided into separate departments with different tasks and responsibilities. The product is packaged as individual courses, which are discrete units with set values" (p. 241). Then, he outlines his plan for a distance learning venture, begun with the investment banker Herbert Allen in 1999, called Global Education Network: GEN. With GEN, Taylor attempts to answer the question: "Is it possible to create an educational institution whose structure and function more closely approximate Nasdaq than a Ford assembly line?" (p. 257). Obviously, Taylor thinks it is, although he believes that "*the effective use of information and telematic technologies does not involve doing the same thing differently but doing something different*" (pp. 257-258, emphasis in the original).

As it stands now, higher education in the US has less to do with learning than with job placement. Given its cost, it is unfair to think that students, who will be heavily in debt after college, should not think about jobs. At the same time, however, an organization like GEN could help students who might not be able to afford four years in a university, but could take one year "on-line," and students who might live far from major universities, but could still have the opportunity to learn from top-notch professors through distance learning. With GEN, Taylor hopes to coax universities into changing with the students. The stakes are high:

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"Education is too important to remain confined within the walls where many people would like to keep it. Colleges and universities are not, and should not be, autonomous institutions devoted to the cultivation of useless knowledge. . . . The task facing educational institutions is to find new ways to turn market forces to their own advantage without losing control of what they produce. The responsibility of educators is to prepare students for life and work in a world changing at warp speed by creatively shaping new educational spaces" (p. 269). If universities were more like complex adaptive systems, they could more readily incorporate new theories into syllabi. As they stand now, all courses are "one size fits all." With GEN, or something like it, students would have the flexibility to continue their research in one course or brush up on skills in another. Unlike the stasis of the contemporary university, a complex adaptive system could lead to more freedom for both students and teachers.

Rhetoric about academia either focuses on the Right's insistence that all tradition and morality in education have been lost or the Left's insistence that all students and all subjects have not been fully incorporated. Taylor's insistence is much more radical. The very people who have long championed post-modernity are now in positions of power in universities. But now that they are in power, they are wedded to an educational system designed for 19th century Germany.

IV

The Moment of Complexity covers a lot of philosophical terrain. There are also discussions of such architects as Mies van der Rohe, Robert Venturi, and Frank Gehry, and such scientists as John Casti, Stuart Kauffman, Douglas Hofstadter, Richard Dawkins, Humberto Mantura, and Francisco Varela. Taylor's philosophy of culture touches on the history of American higher education, international relations, and market capitalism. His comments on education are likely to be the most provocative, especially to his fellow academics. The world of academia has always held an ambiguous relation to the outside world, and it remains to be seen what academics think of the market playing a perhaps even greater role in the academy.

Even though Taylor navigates the waters between Hegel and Kierkegaard, a more apt comparison would be with Augustine. Taylor describes the *Confessions* as explaining subjectivity in particularly contemporary ways. To try to think of Augustine as a "philosopher" in the contemporary sense, however, does not work. There is nothing "armchair" about Augustine's work; it is all "pulpit." He produced texts (he would not have called them that) to teach his flock and to help them understand the world they lived in. In the same way, Taylor's "coda" is central to his argument. Taylor is a teacher concerned with the way his students learn, and how the contemporary academy fails to address new ways of learning in a changed world. As he writes:"A politics that is merely academic is as sterile as theories that are not put into practice. Educators must come to realize that criticism that is not constructive is not adequate. If 'No' does not harbor 'Yes,' it

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should remain unspoken. In the moment of complexity, emerging network culture is creating not only perils but, more important, opportunities for individuals and institutions who, without, losing their critical edge, are willing to say '*Yes.*' The most important legacy we can leave the next generation is the hope that creative change is still possible" (pp. 269-270). There is much to be learned at the intersection of science and the humanities, and *The Moment of Complexity* is an excellent first salvo. However, Taylor's most lasting contribution may well be to inject "hope" into an academic world so bereft of it.

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The Rise of the Mexican New Class

Donald C. Hodges and Ross Gandy, *Mexico: The End of the Revolution* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2002), 224 pp. Hardcover $72.95, Paperback $26.95.

This is the only book in English that provides a complete history of the Mexican Revolution, from the struggle against the dictator Porfirio Díaz before 1910 until the fall of the Institutional Revolutionary Party in the 2000 election. It not only analyzes this Revolution, which has had many spin-offs throughout Latin America, it also discusses a new silent revolution successfully carried out by a New Class of experts, politicians, bureaucrats, etc. As in the US, a new professional class is now in power. This study reveals that the social pact, formalized during the Revolution (1910-1920) and implemented between the 1920s and 1940s, was eroded during a third stage (1940-1970) when the bureaucrat-professionals at the helm opted for intensive economic development. Although momentarily revived during yet a fourth stage (1970-1982), this social pact was later betrayed by the official party of the Revolution and undermined by outside economic forces. Hodges and Gandy reveal that, along with the end of the social pact, Mexico passed out of its former nationalist orbit to enter the new global order fathered by multinational corporations.

Relying on forty years of study of the subject, the authors analyze the rise and fall of social formations in Mexico. Although they focus on the great personalities of the Revolution, such as President Lázaro Cárdenas, they explain events in terms of social forces. Thus, some historians have seen the 1968 massacre of the student movement as a psychotic response by President Díaz Ordaz. Hodges and Gandy explain his repressive policy in terms of the weakening of the social pact, the bureaucratization of the official party, the armed resistance to the regime and a libertarian rebellion of the professional class.

Between 1910 and 1920, during the struggle for political power, Madero and his liberal followers mobilized the underclasses, but the struggle ended with the professional class occupying the National Palace under Alvaro Obregón. The result was a bureaucratic political revolution with a populist ideology. By 1940 a complete land reform had crushed the semifeudal landowners and ushered in a capitalist society. Between 1940 and 1982, however, the authors discover a silent revolution in the depths of the economy — a social revolution in slow motion. Hodges' and Gandy's analysis revolves around the social pact incorporated in the 1917 Constitution. To businessmen, this Constitution offered guarantees, for private property was to be respected. The Constitution also gave great power to the

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state. In the future, the ever-growing professional class would use it to consolidate its power through the presidency. The republican constitution, providing for a congress and a court, would become a fig leaf covering the nakedness of presidential power (and the President was the bureaucracy's man): he made laws, named state governors and chose his successor. To workers, the Constitution guaranteed a better life: the eight-hour work day, accident compensation, profit-sharing, the right to unionize, a rest-day once a week, old age pensions, equal pay for equal work, and no more child labor. To peasants it promised land reform. The big estates had to dissolve into smaller plots, each state fixing the maximum size of farms.

The Constitution also contained various "socialist" articles. The nation has the right to define private property in terms of public interest. The State could limit farm size, and, by implication, the size of things such as corporations, incomes, etc. The state could break up monopolies and, for the public good, it could curb individual pursuit of wealth. All lakes and rivers belong to the state, along with diamonds, copper, gold, iron and oil. Individuals can only own the lands' surface. They can freely develop their property only if they further the interest of all. The State guards the nation's interests against individual greed. In so doing, the Constitution contradicts itself: it springs from 19th century liberalism, yet it contains a sharp departure from that tradition.

The authors trace the efforts of Presidents Obregón, Calles and Cárdenas to maintain the social pact. Between 1920 and 1940 they leaned to the Left. But the pact was unstable, and, after 1940, the government leaned to the Right. From 1970 to 1982, the official party shifted once again to the Left, but the bureaucratization of the economy and the corruption of the PRI ended in the collapse of the social pact under President Carlos Salinas. Throughout the 20th century, Mexico has had the most stable political system in the Third World. This unusual stability can be explained in terms of the social pact. For Hodges and Gandy, this pact was managed by and benefited most the new class of professionals possessing "knowledge." But the political bureaucracy is only one fraction of this new class. It also includes the bureaucracy of multinational corporations, including Mexican giants such as Cemex and Vitro, as well as the military and the union bureaucracy.

Today, the sales of the 500 biggest companies (including many foreign enterprises) that operate in Mexico represent 50% of the GDP (Gross Domestic Product). Nobody owns them as their private property. Giant enterprises like PEMEX, Cemex, Grupo Alfa, Nissan Mexicana, Grupo Carso, Ford, IBM, and Grupo Sanborns, control practically everything. Where is private property and the free market? For Hodges and Gandy, the 500 giants constitute a new *postcapitalist* system. The millions of small enterprises owned by individuals, which provide the bulk of employment, are certainly capitalists that swim in the competitive sea, but they cannot compete with the economic giants, and there are tens of thousands of business failures a year.

This transnational elite that now runs the Mexican government and the mass

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media propagates neoliberal ideology. In Latin America, the small entrepreneurs support neoliberal policies that tax them heavily, receiving little, while support policies of free trade and *laissez-faire* that ruin them. Mexico is a model of what happens in other Latin American republics. According to Hodges and Gandy, the confused middle layers are the main social base of the power elites. The small entrepreneurs make up a "class against itself."

Hodges and Gandy develop a new concept of imperialism. The GNP is the difference between the GDP and the net returns from income transfers to and from the rest of the world. This means that the GNP may be more or less than the GDP. If the GNP/GDP ratio is more than parity — over 100% — it is a country that takes more than it gives. If it is more than 100% there is a favorable balance of income from private and corporate investments (interest, dividends, etc.) and of a government's foreign credits relative to debt and interests. When a country has a positive balance in these payments, it may be considered imperialist.

In 1950, the economies of Japan, Germany and Russia were in ruins, while the US was intact. From 1950 to 1955, the ratio of returning income to investment outflow was over 200% for the US. Between 1955 and 1960, the ratio fell from 253% to 139%. It kept on falling, and by 1995 it was only a bit more than parity. For Hodges and Gandy, the US has ceased to be a major beneficiary of imperialism. Compared to Japan, with a GNP/GDP ratio of 178%, followed by Switzerland, with an enviable 160%, the US economy was closer to that of South Korea's 75% than even to that of the major European powers such as Germany, France, Italy and the United Kingdom. But something is amiss in these comparisons: the role of US-controlled transnationals, whose profits are no longer repatriated as of old. So the US is not involved in imperialism, but its corporate sector is. The directors of transnational corporations make up the core of the new professional class.

To be sure, there is nothing new about Hodges and Gandy's concept of the New Class, traceable to Michael Bakunin, transmitted by his Polish disciple Waclaw Majaisky at the turn of the century, and reiterated throughout the rest of the century by Max Nomad, Daniel Bell, and Alvin W. Gouldner, among others. With the exception of studies of the New Class in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, where it monopolized power, discussions of its role in supposedly capitalist market economies never explored the fundamental economic question of its participation and share in the economic surplus. Among the novelites of this first study of Mexico's New Class is the effort to determine the amount of professional surplus — no easy task — and to compare it with the sum total of proprietary income in the form of entrepreneurial profits, interest, dividends, capital gains, and rents.

The thorny question, of course, is how to define and then measure what the authors call surplus wages — a concept traceable to Marx and defined as the sum total of wages in excess of the average. A scrutiny of government statistics supposedly shows that the ratio of surplus wages to capital income in Mexico approached 100% in the 1960s, and, after 1980, consistently topped capital's

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share. A threshold had been crossed, which the authors interpret as the economic passage from a capitalist to a post-capitalist society.

Hodges and Gandy are less convincing in their treatment of imperialism. In the new global economy dominated by the transnational New Class, they show that Mexico landed in last place when its GDP rose to $698 billion. The GNP/GDP ratio is taken as the measure of not just economic performance, but also imperialist profit. "The Transfer State," to use James Galbraith's term, performs a global as well as domestic role, inasmuch as some economies give more than they take in, and others take in more than they give. In Japan, the world leader in reaping what others sow in 1994, the GNP/GDP ratio had soared to 178%, compared to Mexico's drooping 54%, not simply through unfavorable terms of trade, but also through unfavorable financial flows involving interest payments on accumulated debts. But where is the theft when poor economic performance and lack of competitiveness is the bottom line? Put otherwise, Mexico's economy is a dismal failure. Even the authors concede that there is no hope for the next-door neighbor.

Dena Hurst

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